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## UNNECESSARY FEARS

THERE are certain things of which we are and should be judiciously afraid, such things as the destruction of our forests, earthquakes, and too irritable anarchists. Of others we should be judiciously afraid and are not—a tempting subject this, but herein to be avoided.

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There remain many things of which our fears, all frantic and unbridled, resemble those of a lady confronted by a mouse. The lady, agitated and alarmed, has suffered no previous mutilation at the teeth and claws of her antagonist, nor has she facts at hand of other victims so assailed and injured; she is simply, on general principles, afraid of mice.

One such, an intelligent woman, college bred and "economically independent," on being called on to explain her dread of these small creatures, replied with fervor: "They are such slimy things!"

Now mice are not slimy—they are soft and agreeable to the touch like chinchilla or seal fur. Moreover, she had never touched one, nor had she marked its slimy trail like that of the slug—which is slimy. The phrase was mere word-painting, the expression of a feeling, and excellent as such.

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Society at large, voicing its terrors from platform, pulpit and printed page, and in the confidence of private friendship as well, is in a similar state of nervous alarm about many equally harmless phenomena. We have not confidence enough in humanity, nor in our social structure, nor even in

the laws of nature. We behave as if "this too, too solid flesh *would* melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew," if we were not pretty careful.

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Such an ancient, universally respected, well-established institution as the family, for instance, we seem to consider a mere house of cards, to be blown down by the breath of discussion. When Mona Caird, some twenty years or more ago, produced her modest query, "Is marriage a failure?" there rose so loud a protest that one would almost think it was, and people were afraid of its being found out.

Marriage is not a failure and never has been. Nothing that has endured so long as this social group can be called a failure. But marriage customs and ceremonies vary with race, locality and religion; with conditions of time and space, with due relation to other laws and statutes. Discussion continues, details may alter, but the family remains.

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When the woman's movement became definite and organized about the middle of the last century, it was received with widespread terror lest, forsooth, women should become "unsexed."

Some people are worrying about it still, not having discovered that sex is an initial distinction which began in the warm primeval seas, some dozen or twenty million years ago, more or less, and has worn pretty well ever since. Unsexed! We speak as if it was as easy as being "undressed" or "unbonneted"; as if sex was a thing you had if you wanted to and could leave off at any minute; or as if it could be arbitrarily taken away by another person. We might as easily imagine ourselves being "unboned" or "unbrained." Sex is older than bone or brain, and more vital than either. All this terror might have been avoided. The change in the position of women relative to that of men, and to their former place in society, is a very great one, yet they are still with us; and still very much women, as witness the above instance of the mouse-tormented alumna.

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These waves of horror which were created by woman's early steps toward higher education, professional work, and other liberties, have widened and weakened as they spread, until we find them now but faintly pulsing along the shores of remote backwaters of conservatism; but with new move-

ments rise new fears. Now that the equal-suffrage cause has made such progress—four of our states and eight foreign giving them full suffrage, twenty-one of our states and sixteen foreign giving some form of suffrage—we still find people who fear the effects on women and the State.

Fear is for the future exclusively. We do not fear a thing that has happened. Woman's suffrage has happened. It is now a long-established fact. Our own State of Wyoming has put up with it for over a generation, and offers no proof of unsexed womanhood, of social ruin or financial wreck. On the contrary, the three other states which have followed its example all touch Wyoming. They have seen it work.

This is one thing of which we can leave off being afraid. We need not waver and wonder over what it will or will not do, may or may not do; we have but to note what it has—and has not—done.

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Many have outgrown this particular dread, and are now terrified in other directions. Some iconoclast has dared to criticise our ancient art of kitchenry; has breathed the suggestion that we might be better—and more cheaply—fed. Great is our concern at this heresy. We see ourselves on the instant, not precisely unsexed, but unkitchened, which is about as bad. Visions of noisy restaurants, expensive hotels, and tedious boarding houses, with lamb stew and corned beef coming as regularly as the bills, rise before us.

We assume, in our haste and resentment, that every private kitchen is sanitary and convenient, every private cook a chef, every domestic menu one long series of dietetic triumphs and delicious surprises. We imagine that all this heaven of mother-made pastry is to be reft from us in the twinkling of an eye, and that we shall be driven in herds to vast clattering halls of thick china ware, brassy forks and a low-grade monotony in flavors. Why this terror? Does one swallow make a summer? Does one critic, in a moment, overthrow the conventions of a thousand centuries? If we will cease trembling and measure the mouse, is it not a small thing of which to be so afraid?

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In cosy kitchens clean farmers' wives still manufacture pleasant pies, in others of various sorts all manner of women are still serving all manner of food as well as they are able. No serious harm is done as yet to our beloved culinary base. Quite a continuous stream of criticism, much proof, many

daring experiments, we may survive, and still build the kitchen fire every morning.

Moreover—at the worst—if any strange, new, offensive, coldly superior method of feeding people is discovered, it will not be compulsory. Let us take heart of grace! The kitchen is safe and sure so long as anyone on earth wishes to maintain one.

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To-day a new fear and a graver one is rife in men's minds. This, if it had a foundation, would be cause indeed for alarm. No more deadly danger could confront us than this, if this be true. We are afraid of a shortage in children. We are afraid that women, uncertain creatures that they are, are going to leave off bearing children. We are deeply anxious about Motherhood.

Motherhood, one would judge from current exhortations, is an arduously acquired virtue, a habit induced by certain fortuitous conditions, and liable to quick extinction if conditions change.

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This fear is even more foolish than that of becoming unsexed. Motherhood is even deeper than sex. Things reproduced themselves in thick crowding millions when it was merely by fission. Motherhood is *the* condition of life; its imperious instinct is stronger far than mere love of living. We might more rationally suppose that the love of life would leave us, than the love of motherhood.

Moreover, if some few women are not personally fit for motherhood nor inclined to it, therein is no loss, for such are not good mothers if it is forced upon them; and as they remain childless their disability is not transmitted to the race. Those who want to be mothers and are mothers will keep up our supply of natural instincts.

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So long as we have war, and monogamy, there will be a number of women who can not be married. This has never worried us particularly. The large percentage of widows and maiden aunts who could not help themselves, but who led useful lives bringing up other women's children, have never been considered a social danger.

The voluntary "bachelor maids" of to-day are not so large a class as to rouse any anxiety, but they are more visible, more vocal, and they presume to be happy in their independence. Hence our alarm.



They are vain, all vain, these painful fears. . Most of the things we are afraid of are not going to happen. Those that are approaching will come because they are improvements, and come so gradually that the world will not be jarred in the process. Little by little we shall get used to them. Progress has been too good a friend to us so far for any distrust of its further benefits.

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Some, albeit calmed in degree by labored proofs of the limitations of the mouse before them, are still afraid that it will come upon them suddenly. Perhaps some memory of studies in physics haunts the mind, to the effect that the force of an impact is in proportion to the square of the velocity—and mice run fast! This is true in the abstract. A mouse, like a tallow candle, might be fired through a board; but if one came at us in that way we should never know it until perforated. Social changes are not cataclysmic.

Let us cast a reassuring glance downstairs, the long historic stairs up which we have so slowly climbed, and see what frequent changes have been met, and have survived. As a final reassurance, if the timid still point to the increasing speed of our modern progress and fear lest our centrifugal force scatter us into star dust, we may yet find comfort in our worst evils.

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No society so well ballasted as ours by large old-fashioned sins, so heavily burdened with old habits, is ever going to reform too fast.

She does move, but she moves slowly.



# THROUGH THE WALL

BY CLEVELAND MOFFETT

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## CHAPTER I

### A BLOOD-RED SKY



It is worthy of note that the most remarkable criminal case in which the famous French detective Paul Coquenil was ever engaged, a case of more baffling mystery than the Palais Royal diamond robbery and of far greater peril to him than the Marseilles trunk drama—in short, a case that ranks with the most important ones of modern police history—would never have been undertaken by Coquenil (and in that event might never have been solved) but for the extraordinary faith this man had in certain strange intuitions or forms of half knowledge that came to him at critical moments of his life, bringing marvelous guidance. Who but one possessed of such faith would have given up fortune, high position, the reward of a whole career, *simply because a girl whom he did not know spoke some chance words that neither he nor she understood?* Yet that is exactly what Coquenil did.

It was late in the afternoon of a hot July day, the hottest day Paris had known that year (1907), and M. Coquenil, followed by a splendid white and brown shepherd dog, was walking down the Rue de la Cité, past the somber mass of the city hospital. Before reaching the Place Notre Dame he stopped twice, once at a flower market that offered the grateful shade of its gnarled polonia trees just beyond the Conciergerie prison, and once under the heavy archway of the Prefecture de Police. At the flower market he bought a white

carnation from a woman in green apron and wooden shoes, who looked in awe at his pale, grave face, and thrilled when he gave her a smile and friendly word. She wondered if it was true, as people said, that M. Coquenil always wore glasses with a slightly bluish tint so that no one could see his eyes.

The detective walked on, busy with pleasant thoughts. This was the hour of his triumph and justification, this made up for the cruel blow that had fallen two years before and resulted, no one understood why, in his leaving the Paris detective force at the very moment of his glory, when the whole city was praising him for the St. Germain investigation. *Beau Cocono*. That was the name they had given him; he could hear the night crowds shouting it in a silly couplet:

*Il nous faut-o  
Beau Cocono-o!*

And then what a change within a week! What bitterness and humiliation! M. Paul Coquenil, after scores of brilliant successes, had withdrawn from the police force for personal reasons, said the newspapers. His health was affected, some declared; he had laid by a tidy fortune and wished to enjoy it, thought others; but many shook their heads mysteriously and whispered that there was something queer in all this. Coquenil himself said nothing.

But now facts would speak for him more eloquently than any words; now, within twenty-four hours, it would be announced that he had been chosen, *on the recommendation of the Paris police department*, to organize the detective service of a foreign capital, with a life position at the head of this service and a much larger sal-



M. Coquenil.

ary than he had ever received, a larger salary, in fact, than Paris paid to its own chief of police.

M. Coquenil had reached this point in his musings when he caught sight of a red-faced man, with a large purplish nose and a suspiciously black mustache (for his hair was gray), coming forward from the prefecture to meet him.

"Ah, Papa Tignol!" he said briskly. "How goes it?"

The old man saluted deferentially, and then, half shutting his small gray eyes, replied with an ominous chuckle, as one who enjoys bad news: "Eh, well enough, M. Paul; but I don't like *that*." And, lifting an unshaven chin, he pointed over his shoulder with a long, grimy thumb to the western sky.

"Always croaking!" laughed the other. "Why, it's a fine sunset, man!"

Tignol answered slowly, with objecting nod: "It's too red. And it's barred with purple!"

"Like your nose. Ha, ha!" And Coquenil's face lighted gayly. "Forgive me, Papa Tignol."

"Have your joke if you will, but," he turned with sudden directness, "don't you remember when we had a blood-red sky like that? Ah, you don't laugh now!"

It was true, Coquenil's look had deepened into one of somber reminiscence.

"You mean the murders in the Rue Montaigne?"

"Pre-cisely."

"Pooh! A foolish fancy! How many red sunsets have there been since we found those two poor women stretched out in their white-and-gold *salon*? Well, I must get on. Come to-night at nine. There will be news for you."

"News for me?" echoed the old man. "*Au revoir*, M. Paul," and he watched the slender, well-knit figure as the detective moved across the Place Notre Dame, snapping his fingers playfully at the splendid animal that bounded beside him and speaking to the dog in confidential friendliness.

"We'll show 'em, eh, Cæsar?" And the dog answered with eager barking and quick-wagging tail.

So these two companions advanced to-

ward the great cathedral, directing their steps to the left-hand portal under the Northern tower. Here they paused before statues of various saints and angels that overhang the blackened doorway while Coquenil said something to a professional beggar, who straightway disappeared inside the church. Cæsar, meantime, with panting tongue, was eying the decapitated St. Denis, asking himself, one would say, how even a saint could carry his head in his hands.

And presently there appeared a white-bearded sacristan in a three-cornered hat of blue and gold and a gold-embroidered coat. For all his brave apparel he was a small, mild-mannered person, with kindly brown eyes and a way of smiling sadly as if he had forgotten how to laugh.

"Ah, Bonneton, my friend!" said Coquenil, and then, with a quizzical glance: "My decorative friend!"

"Good evening, M. Paul," answered the other, while he patted the dog affectionately. "Shall I take Cæsar?"

"One moment; I have news for you." Then, while the other listened anxiously, he told of his brilliant appointment in Rio Janeiro and of his imminent departure. He was sailing for Brazil in three days.

"*Mon Dieu!*" murmured Bonneton in dismay. "Sailing for Brazil! So our friends leave us. Of course I'm glad for you; it's a great chance, but—will you take Cæsar?"

"I couldn't leave my dog, could I?" smiled Coquenil.

"Of course not! Of course not! And such a dog! You've been kind to let him guard the church since old Max died. Come, Cæsar! Just a moment, M. Paul." And with real emotion the sacristan led the dog away, leaving the detective all unconscious that he had reached a critical moment in his destiny.

How the course of events would have been changed had Paul Coquenil remained outside Notre Dame on this occasion it is impossible to know; the fact is he did not remain outside, but, growing impatient at Bonneton's delay, he pushed open the double swinging doors, with their coverings of leather and red velvet, and entered the sanctuary. And immediately he saw the girl.

She was in the shadows near a statue of

the Virgin before which candles were burning. On the table were rosaries and talismans and candles of different lengths that it was evidently the girl's business to sell. In front of the Virgin's shrine was a *prie dieu* at which a woman was kneeling, but she presently rose and went out, and the girl sat there alone. She was looking down at a piece of embroidery, and Coquenil noticed her shapely white hands and the mass of red golden hair coiled above her neck. When she lifted her eyes he saw that they were dark and beautiful, though tinged with sadness. He was surprised to find this lovely young woman selling candles here in Notre Dame Church.

And suddenly he was more surprised, for as the girl glanced up she met his gaze fixed on her, and immediately there came into her face a look so strange, so glad, and yet so frightened that Coquenil went to her quickly with reassuring smile. He was sure he had never seen her before, yet he realized that somehow she was equally sure that she knew him.

What followed was seen by only one person, that is, the sacristan's wife, a big, hard-faced woman with a faint mustache and a wart on her chin, who sat by the great column near the door dispensing holy water out of a cracked saucer and whining for pennies. Nothing escaped the hawk-like eyes of Mother Bonneton, and now, with growing curiosity, she watched the scene between Coquenil and the candle seller. What interest could a great detective have in this girl, Alice, whom she and her husband had taken in as a half-charity boarder? Such airs as she gave herself! What was she saying now? Why should he look at her like that? The baggage!

"Holy saints, how she talks!" grumbled the sacristan's wife. "And see the eyes she makes! And how he listens! The man must be crazy to waste his time on her! Now he asks a question and she talks again with that queer, far-away look. He frowns and clenches his hands, and—upon my soul, he seems afraid of her! He says something and starts to come away. Ah, now he turns and stares at her as if he had seen a ghost! *Mon Dieu, quelle folie!*"

This whole incident occupied scarcely five minutes, yet it wrought an extraordi-

nary change in Coquenil. All his buoyancy was gone, and he looked worn, almost haggard as he walked to the church door with hard-shut teeth and face set in an ominous frown.

"There's some devil's work in this," he muttered, and as his eyes caught the fires of the lurid sky he thought of Papa Tignol's words.

"What is it?" asked the sacristan, approaching timidly.

The detective faced him sharply. "Who is the girl in there? Where did she come from? How did she get here? Why does she—" He stopped abruptly, and, pressing the fingers of his two hands against his forehead, he stroked the brows over his closed eyes as if he were combing away error. "No, no!"—changing—"don't tell me yet. I must be alone; I must think. Come to me at nine to-night."

"I—I'll try to come," said Bonneton, with visions of his wife objecting.

"You *must* come," insisted the detective. "Remember, nine o'clock," and he started to go.

"Yes, yes, quite so," murmured the sacristan, following him. "But, M. Paul—er—which day do you sail?"

Coquenil turned and snapped out angrily: "I may not sail at all."

"But the—the position in Rio Janeiro?"

"A thousand thunders! Don't talk to me!" cried the other, and there was such black rage in his look that Bonneton cowered away, clasping and unclasping his hands and murmuring meekly: "Ah, yes, exactly."

So much for the humble influence that turned Paul Coquenil toward an unbelievable decision and led him ultimately into the most desperate struggle of his long and exciting career. A day of sinister portent this must have been, for scarcely had Coquenil left Notre Dame when another scene was enacted there that should have been happy, but that, alas! showed only a rough and devious way stretching before two lovers. And again it was the girl who made trouble, this seller of candles, with her fine hands and hair and her wistful dark eyes. A strange and pathetic figure she was, sitting there alone in the somber church. Quite alone now, for it was closing time, Mother Bonneton had shuffled off rheumatically after a cutting word—

she knew better than to ask what had happened—and the old sacristan, lantern in hand and Caesar before him, was making his round of the galleries, securing doors and windows.

With a shiver of apprehension Alice turned away from the whispering shadows and went to the Virgin's shrine, where she knelt and tried to pray. The candles sputtered before her, and she shut her eyes tight, which made colored patterns come and go behind the lids, fascinating geometrical figures that changed and faded and grew stronger. And suddenly, inside a widening green circle, she saw a face, the face of a young man with laughing gray eyes, and her heart beat with joy. She loved him, she loved him!—that was her secret and the cause of her unhappiness, for she must hide her love, especially from him; she must give him some cold word, some evasive reason, not the real one, when he should come presently for his answer. Ah, that was the great fact, he was coming for his answer—he, her hero man, her impetuous American with the name she liked so much, Lloyd Kittredge—how often she had murmured that name in her lonely hours!—he would be here shortly for his answer.

And, alas! she must say "No" to him, she must give him pain; she could not hope to make him understand—how could anyone understand?—and then, perhaps, he would misjudge her, perhaps he would leave her in anger and not come back any more. Not come back any more! The thought cut with a sharp pang, and in her distress she moved her lips silently in the familiar prayer printed before her:

O Marie, souvenez vous du moment supreme  
ou Jesus votre divin Fils, expirant sur la croix,  
nous confia à votre maternelle sollicitude.

Her thoughts wandered from the page and flew back to her lover. Why was he so impatient? Why was he not willing to let their friendship go on as it had been all these months? Why must he ask this inconceivable question and insist on having an answer? His wife! Her cheeks flamed at the word and her heart throbbed wildly. His wife! How wonderful that he should have chosen her, so poor and obscure, for such an honor, the highest he could pay a



woman! Whatever happened she would at least have this beautiful memory to comfort her loneliness and sorrow.

A descending step on the tower stairs broke in upon her meditations, and she rose quickly from her knees. The sacristan had finished his rounds and was coming to close the outer doors. It was time for her to go. And, with a glance at her hair in a little glass and a touch to her hat, she went out into the garden back of Notre Dame, where she knew her lover would be waiting. There he was, strolling along the graveled walk near the fountain, switching his cane impatiently. He had not seen her yet, and she stood still, looking at him fondly, dreading what was to come, yet longing to hear the sound of his voice. How handsome he was! What a nice gray suit, and—then Kittredge turned.

"Ah, at last!" he exclaimed, springing toward her with a mirthful, boyish smile. His face was ruddy and clean shaven, the twinkling eyes and humorous lines about the mouth suggesting some joke or drollery always ready on his lips. Yet his was a frank, manly face, easily likable. He was a man of twenty-seven, slender of build, but carrying himself well. In dress he had the quiet good taste that some men are born with, besides a willingness to take pains about shirts, boots, and cravats—in short, he looked like a well-groomed Englishman. Unlike the average Englishman, however, he spoke almost perfect French, owing to the fact that his American father had married into one of the old Creole families of New Orleans.

"How is your royal American constitution?" she smiled, repeating in excellent English one of the nonsensical phrases he was fond of using. She tried to say it gayly, but he was not deceived, and answered seriously in French:

"Hold on. There's something wrong. We've been sad, eh?"

"Why—er—" she began, "I—er—"

"Been worrying, I know. Too much church. Too much of that old she-dragon. Come over here and tell me about it." He led her to a bench shaded by a friendly sycamore tree. "Now then."

She faced him with troubled eyes, searching vainly for words and finding nothing. The crisis had come, and she did not know how to meet it. Her red lips trembled, her

eyes grew melting, and she sat there silent and delicious in her perplexity. Kittredge thrilled under the spell of her beauty; he longed to take her in his arms and comfort her.

"Suppose we go back a little," he said reassuringly. "About six months ago, I think it was in January, a young chap in a fur overcoat drifted into this old stone barn and took a turn around it. He saw the treasure and the fake relics and the white marble French gentleman trying to get out of his coffin. And he didn't care a hang about any of 'em until he saw you. Then he began to take notice. The next day he came back and you sold him a little red guide book that told all about the twenty-five chapels and the seven hundred and ninety-two saints. No, seven hundred and ninety-three, for there was one saint, with wonderful eyes and glorious hair and——"

"Please don't," she murmured.

"Why not? You don't know which saint I was talking about. It was My Lady of the Candles. She had the most beautiful hands in the world, and all day long she sat at a table making stitches on cloth of gold. Which was bad for her eyes, by the way."

"Ah, yes!" sighed Alice.

"There are all kinds of miracles in Notre Dame," he went on playfully, "but the greatest miracle is how this saint with the eyes and the hands and the hair ever dropped down at that little table. Nobody could explain it, so the young fellow with the fur overcoat kept coming back and coming back to see if he could figure it out. Only soon he came without his overcoat."

"In bitter cold weather," she said reproachfully.

"He was pretty blue that day, wasn't he? Dead sore on the game. Money all blown in, overcoat up the spout, nothing ahead, and a whole year of—of damned foolishness behind. Excuse me, but that's what it was. Well, he blew in that day and—he walked over to where you were sitting, you darling little saint!"

"No, no," murmured Alice, "not a saint, only a poor girl who saw you were unhappy and—and was sorry."

Their eyes met tenderly, and for a moment neither spoke. Then Kittredge went on unsteadily: "Anyhow you were kind to



me, and I opened up a little. I told you a few things, and—when I went away I felt more like a man. I said to myself: 'Lloyd Kittredge, if you're any good you'll cut out this thing that's been raising hell with you'—excuse me, but that's what it was—and you'll make a new start, right now.' And I did it. There's a lot you don't know, but you can bet all your rosaries and relics that I've made a fair fight since then. I've worked and—been decent and—I did it all for you." His voice was

"And—and you refuse me?"

For a moment she did not speak. Then slowly she nodded, as if pronouncing her own doom.

"Alice," he cried, "look up here! You don't mean it. Say it isn't true!"

She lifted her eyes bravely and faced him. "It is true, Lloyd; I can never be your wife."

"But why? Why?"

"I—I cannot tell you," she faltered.

He was about to speak impatiently, but



"She sat there silent."

vibrant now with passion; he caught her hand in his and repeated the words, leaning closer, so that she felt his warm breath on her cheek. "All for you. You know that, don't you, Alice?"

What a moment for a girl whose whole soul was quivering with fondness! What a proud, beautiful moment! He loved her, he loved her! Yet she drew her hand away and forced herself to say, as if reprovingly: "You mustn't do that!"

He looked at her in surprise, and then, with challenging directness: "Why not?"

"Because I cannot be what you—what you want me to be," she answered, looking down.

"I want you to be my wife."

"I know."

before her evident distress he checked the words and asked gently: "Is it something against me?"

"Oh, no!" she answered quickly.

"Sure? Isn't it something you've heard that I've done or—or not done? Don't be afraid to hurt my feelings. I'll make a clean breast of it all, if you say so. God knows I was a fool, but I've kept straight since I knew you, I'll swear to that."

"I believe you, dear."

"You believe me, you call me 'dear,' you look at me out of those wonderful eyes as if you cared for me."

"I do, I do," she murmured.

"You care for me, and yet you turn me down," he said bitterly.

"You don't think that, you *can't* think that of me?" she pleaded.

"I'd rather think you a coquette than—" Again he checked himself at the sight of her trouble. He could not speak harshly to her.

"You dear child," he went on tenderly. "I'll never believe any ill of you, never. I won't even ask your reasons; but I want some encouragement, something to work for. I've got to have it. Just let me go on hoping; say that in six months or—or even a year you will be my own sweetheart—promise me that and I'll wait patiently. Can't you promise me that?"

But again she shook her head, while her eyes filled slowly with tears.

And now his face darkened. "Then you will never be my wife? Never? No matter what I do or how long I wait? Is that it?"

"That's it," she repeated, with a little sob.

Kittredge rose, eying her sternly. "I understand," he said, "or rather I don't understand; but there's no use talking any more. I'll take my medicine and—good-by."

She looked at him in frightened supplication. "You won't leave me? Lloyd, you won't leave me?"

He laughed harshly. "What do you think I am? A jumping jack for you to pull a string and make me dance? Well, I guess not. Leave you? Of course I'll leave you. I wish I had never seen you; I'm sorry I ever came inside this blooming church!"

"Oh!" she gasped, in sudden pain.

"You don't play fair," he went on recklessly. "You haven't played fair at all. You knew I loved you, and—you led me on, and—this is the end of it."

"No!" she cried, stung by his words, "it's *not* the end of it. I *won't* be judged like that. I *have* played fair with you. If I hadn't I would have accepted you, for I love you, Lloyd, I love you with all my heart!"

"I like the way you show it," he answered, unrelenting.

"Haven't I helped you all these months? Isn't my friendship something?"

He shook his head. "It isn't enough for me."

"Then how about *me*, if I want *your*

friendship, if I'm hungry for it, if it's all I have in life? How about that, Lloyd?" Under their dark lashes her violet eyes were burning on him, but he hardened his heart to their pleading.

"It sounds well, but there's no sense in it. I can't stand for this let-me-be-a-sister-to-you game, and I won't."

He turned away impatiently and glanced at his watch.

"Lloyd," she said gently, "come to the house to-night."

He shook his head. "Got an appointment."

"An appointment?"

"Yes, a banquet."

She looked at him in surprise. "You didn't tell me!"

"No."

She was silent a moment. "Where is the banquet?"

"At the Ansonia. It's a new restaurant on the Champs Elysées, very swell. I didn't tell you because—well, because I didn't."

"Lloyd," she whispered, "don't go to the banquet."

"Don't go? Why, this is our national holiday. I'm down to tell some stories. I've *got* to go. Besides, I wouldn't come to you anyway. What's the use? I've said all I can, and you've said 'No.' So it's all off—that's right, Alice, *it's all off*." His eyes were kinder now, but he spoke firmly.

"Lloyd," she begged, "come *after* the banquet."

"No!"

"I ask it for *you*. I—I feel that something is going to happen. Don't laugh. Look at the sky, there beyond the black towers. It's red, red like blood, and—Lloyd, I'm afraid."

Her eyes were fixed in the west with an enthralled expression, as if she saw something there besides the masses of red and purple that crowned the setting sun, something strange and terrifying. And in her agitation she took the book and pencil from the bench, and nervously, almost unconsciously wrote something on one of the fly leaves.

"Good-by, Alice," he said, holding out his hand.

"Good-by, Lloyd," she answered, in a dull, tired voice, putting down the book and giving him her own little hand.

As he turned to go he picked up the volume and his eye fell on the fly leaf.

"Why," he started, "what is this?" He looked more closely at the words, then sharply at her.

"I—I'm so sorry," she stammered.

"Have I spoiled your book?"

"Never mind the book, but—how did you come to write this?"

"I—I didn't notice what I wrote," she said, in confusion.

"Do you mean to say that you don't know what you wrote?"

"I don't know at all," she replied, with evident sincerity.

"It's the queerest thing I ever heard of," he muttered. And then, with a puzzled look: "See here, I guess I've been too previous. I'll cut out that banquet to-night—that is, I'll show up for soup and fish, and then I'll come to you. Do I get a smile now?"

"O Lloyd!" she murmured happily.

"I'll be there about nine."

"About nine," she repeated, and again her eyes turned anxiously to the blood-red western sky.

## CHAPTER II

### COQUENIL'S GREATEST CASE

AFTER leaving Notre Dame, Paul Coquenil directed his steps toward the prefecture of police, but half way across the square he glanced back at the church clock that shows its white face above the grinning gargoyles, and, pausing, he stood a moment in deep thought.

"A quarter to seven," he reflected; then, turning to the right, he walked quickly to a little wine shop with flowers in the windows, the Tavern of the Three Wise Men, an interesting fragment of old-time Paris that offers its cheery but battered hospitality under the very shadow of the great cathedral.

"Ah, I thought so!" he muttered, as he recognized Papa Tignol at one of the tables on the terrace. And approaching the old man, he said in a low tone: "I want you."

Tignol looked up quickly from his glass, and his face lighted. "Eh, M. Paul again!"

"I must see M. Pougeot," continued the

detective. "It's important. Go to his office. If he isn't there, go to his house. Anyhow, find him and tell him to come to me *at once*. Hurry on; I'll pay for this."

"Shall I take an auto?"

"Take anything, only hurry."

"And you want *me* at nine o'clock?"

Coquenil shook his head. "Not until to-morrow."

"But the news you were going to tell me?"

"There'll be bigger news soon. Oh, run across to the church and tell Bonneton that he needn't come either."

"I knew it, I knew it!" chuckled Papa Tignol, as he trotted off. "There's something doing!"

With this much arranged Coquenil, after paying for his friend's absinthe, strolled over to a cab stand near the statue of Henri IV and selected a horse that could not possibly make more than four miles an hour. Behind this deliberate animal he seated himself, and giving the driver his address, he charged him gravely not to go too fast, and settled back against the cushions to comfortable meditations. "There is no better way to think out a tough problem," he used to insist, "than to take a very long drive in a very slow cab."

It may have been that this horse was not slow enough, for forty minutes later Coquenil's frown was still unrelaxed when they drew up at the Villa Montmorency, really a collection of villas, some dozens of them, in a private park near the Bois de Boulogne, each villa a garden within a garden, and the whole surrounded by a great stone wall that shuts out noises and intrusions. They entered by a massive iron gateway on the Rue Poussin and moved slowly up the ascending Avenue des Tilleuls, past lawns and trees and vine-covered walls, leaving behind the rush and glare of the city and entering a peaceful region of flowers and verdure where Coquenil lived.

The detective occupied a wing of the original Montmorency château, a habitation of ten spacious rooms, more than enough for himself and his mother and the faithful old servant, Melanie, who took care of them, especially during these summer months, when Madame Coquenil was away at a country place in the Vosges Mountains that her son had bought for her. Paul Coquenil had never married, and his friends



"*'I want you,' he said in a low tone.*"

declared that, besides his work, he loved only two things in the world—his mother and his dog.

It was a quarter to eight, and M. Paul sat down in his spacious dining room to a meal that was waiting when he arrived and that Melanie served with solicitous care, remarking sadly that her master scarcely touched anything, his eyes roving here and there among charming mountain scenes that covered the four walls above the brown-and-gold wainscoting, or out into the garden through the long, open windows; he was searching, searching for something, she knew the signs, and with a sigh she took away her most tempting dishes untasted.

At eight o'clock the detective rose from the table and withdrew into his study, a large room opening off the dining room and furnished like no other study in the world. Around the walls were low book-cases with wide tops on which were spread, under glass, what Coquenil called his criminal museum. This included souvenirs of cases on which he had been engaged, weapons used by murderers, wonderful sets

of burglars' tools—saws, picks, jointed jimmies, etc., all of tempered steel, that could be taken apart and folded up in the space of a thick cigar and hidden about the person. Also a remarkable collection of handcuffs from many countries and periods in history. Also a collection of letters of criminals, some in cipher, with confessions of prisoners and last words of suicides. Also plaster casts of hands of famous criminals. And photographs of criminals, men and women, with faces often distorted to avoid recognition. And various grewsome objects, a card case of human skin, the twisted scarf used by a strangler, etc.

As for the shelves underneath, they contained an unequalled special library of subjects interesting to a detective, both science and fiction being freely drawn upon in French, English, and German. While Coquenil was a man of action in a big way, he was also a student and a reader of books, and he delighted in long, lonely evenings, when, as now, he sat in his comfortable study thinking, thinking.

Melanie entered presently with coffee

and cigarettes, which she placed on a table near the green-shaded lamp, within easy reach of the great red-leather chair where M. Paul was seated. Then she stole out noiselessly. It was five minutes past eight, and for an hour Coquenil thought and smoked and drank coffee. Occasionally he frowned and moved impatiently, and several times he took off his glasses and stroked his brows over the eyes. Finally he gave a long sigh of relief, and shutting his hands and throwing out his arms with a satisfied gesture, he rose and walked to the fireplace, over which hung a large portrait of his mother and several photographs, one of these taken in the exact attitude and costume of the painting of Whistler's mother in the Luxembourg gallery. M. Paul was proud of the striking resemblance between the two women. For some moments he stood before the fine, kindly face, and then he said aloud, as if speaking to her: "It looks like a hard fight, little mother, but I'm not afraid of it." And almost as he spoke, which seemed like a good omen, there came a clang at the iron gate in the garden and the sound of quick, crunching steps on the gravel walk. M. Pougeot had arrived.

M. Lucien Pougeot was one of the eighty police commissaries who, each in his own quarter, oversee the moral washing of Paris' dirty linen. A commissary of police is first of all a magistrate, but, unless he is a fool, he soon becomes a profound student of human nature, for he sees all sides of life in the great gay capital, especially the darker sides. He knows the sins of his fellow men and women, their follies and hypocrisies, he receives incredible confessions, he is constantly summoned to the scenes of revolting crime. Nothing, *absolutely nothing*, surprises him, and he has no illusions, yet he usually manages to keep a store of grim pity for erring humanity. M. Pougeot was one of the most distinguished and intelligent members of this interesting body. He was a devoted friend of Paul Coquenil.

The newcomer was a middle-aged man of strong build and florid face, with a brush of thick black hair. His quick-glancing eyes were at once cold and kind, but the kindness had something terrifying in it, like the politeness of an executioner. As the two men stood together they presented

absolutely opposite types: Coquenil taller, younger, deep-eyed, spare of build, with a certain serious reserve very different from the commissary's outspoken directness. M. Pougeot prided himself on reading men's thoughts, but he used to say that he could not even imagine what Coquenil was thinking or fathom the depths of a nature that blended the eagerness of a child with the austerity of a prophet.

"Well," remarked the commissary when they were settled in their chairs, "I suppose it's the Rio Janeiro thing? Some parting instructions, eh?" And he turned to light a cigar.

Coquenil shook his head.

"When do you sail?"

"I'm not sailing."

"Wha-at?"

For once in his life M. Pougeot was surprised. He knew all about this foreign offer, with its extraordinary money advantages; he had rejoiced in his friend's good fortune after two unhappy years, and now—now Coquenil informed him calmly that he was not sailing.

"I have just made a decision, the most important decision of my life," continued the detective, "and I want you to know about it. You are the only person in the world who *will* know—everything. So listen! This afternoon I went into Notre Dame Church and I saw a young girl there who sells candles. I didn't know her, but she looked up in a queer way, as if she wanted to speak to me, so I went to her and—well, she told me of a dream she had last night."

"A dream?" snorted the commissary.

"So she said. She may have been lying or she may have been put up to it; I know nothing about her, not even her name, but that's of no consequence; the point is that in this dream, as she called it, she brought together the two most important events in my life."

"Hm! What *was* the dream?"

"She says she saw me twice, once in a forest near a wooden bridge where a man with a beard was talking to a woman and a little girl. Then she saw me on a boat going to a place where there were black people."

"That was Brazil?"

"I suppose so. And there was a burning sun with a wicked face inside that kept



looking down at me. She says she often dreams of this wicked face, she sees it first in a distant star that comes nearer and nearer, until it gets to be large and red and angry. As the face comes closer her fear grows, until she wakes with a start of terror; she says she would die of fright if the face ever reached her *before* she awoke. That's about all."

For some moments the commissary did not speak. "Did she try to interpret this dream?"

"No."

"Why did she tell you about it?"

"She acted on a sudden impulse, so she says. I'm inclined to believe her; but never mind that. Pougeot," he rose in agitation and stood leaning over his friend, "in that forest scene she brought up something that isn't known, something I've never even told you, my best friend."

"*Tiens!* What is that?"

"You think I resigned from the police force two years ago, don't you?"

"Of course."

"Everyone thinks so. Well, it isn't true. I *didn't* resign; I *was* discharged!"

M. Pougeot stared in bewilderment, as if words failed him, and finally he repeated weakly: "Discharged! Paul Coquenil discharged!"

"Yes, sir, discharged from the Paris detective force for refusing to arrest a murderer—that's how the accusation read."

"But it wasn't true?"

"Judge for yourself. It was the case of a poacher who killed a guard. I don't suppose you remember it?"

M. Pougeot thought a moment—he prided himself on remembering everything.

"Down near Saumur, wasn't it?"

"Exactly. And it was near Saumur I found him after searching all over France. We were clean off the track, and I made up my mind the only way to get him was through his wife and child. They lived in a little house in the woods not far from the place of the shooting. I went there as a peddler in hard luck, and I played my part so well that the woman consented to take me in as a boarder."

"Wonderful man!" exclaimed the commissary.

"For weeks it was a waiting game. I would go away on a peddling tour and then come back as boarder. Nothing devel-

oped, but I could not get rid of the feeling that my man was somewhere near in the woods."

"One of your intuitions. Well?"

"Well, at last the woman became convinced that they had nothing to fear from me, and she did things more openly. One day I saw her put some food in a basket and give it to the little girl. And the little girl went off with the basket into the forest. Then I knew I was right, and the next day I followed the little girl, and, sure enough, she led me to a rough cave where her father was hiding. I hung about there for an hour or two, and finally the man came out from the cave and I saw him talk to his wife and child near a bridge over a mountain torrent."

"The picture that girl saw in the dream!"

"Yes; I'll never forget it. I had my pistol ready and he was defenseless; and once I was just springing forward to take the fellow when he bent over and kissed his little girl. I don't know how you look at these things, Pougeot, but I couldn't break in there and take that man away from his wife and child. The woman had been kind to me and trusted me, and—well, it was a breach of duty and they punished me for it; but I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it and I didn't do it."

"And you let the fellow go?"

"I let him go *then*, but I got him a week later in a fair fight, man to man. They gave him ten years."

"And discharged you from the force?"

"Yes. That is, in view of my past services, they *allowed* me to resign." Coquenil spoke bitterly.

"Outrageous! Unbelievable!" muttered Pougeot. "No doubt you were technically in the wrong, but it was a slight offense, and after all you got your man. A reprimand at the most, *at the most*, was called for, and *not* with you, not with Paul Coquenil."

The commissary spoke with deeper feeling than he had shown in years, and then, as if not satisfied with this, he clasped the detective's hand and added heartily: "I'm proud of you, old friend, I honor you."

Coquenil looked at Pougeot with an odd little smile. "You take it just as I thought you would, just as I took it myself—until to-day. It seems like a stupid blunder,



doesn't it? Well, it wasn't a blunder; *it was a necessary move in the game.*" His face lighted with intense eagerness as he waited for the effect of these words.

"The game? What game?" stared the commissary.

"A game involving a great crime."

"You are sure of that?"

"Perfectly sure."

"You have the facts of this crime?"

"No. It hasn't been committed yet."

"Not committed yet?" repeated the other, with a startled glance. "But you know the plan? You have evidence?"

"I have what is perfectly clear evidence *to me*, so clear that I wonder I never saw it before. Lucien, suppose you were a great criminal—I don't mean the ordinary clever scoundrel who succeeds for a time and is finally caught, but a *really great criminal*, the kind that appears once or twice in a century, a man with immense power and intelligence."

"Like Vautrin in Napoleon's day?"

"Vautrin was a brilliant adventurer; he made millions with his swindling-schemes, but he had no stability, no big purpose, and he finally came to grief. There have been greater criminals than Vautrin, men whose crimes have brought them *everything*—fortune, social position, political supremacy—and *who have never been found out!*"

"Do you really think so?"

Coquenil nodded. "There have been a few like that with master minds, a very few; I have documents to prove it"—he pointed to his bookcases; "but we haven't time for that. Come back to my question: Suppose *you* were such a criminal, and suppose there was one person in this city who was thwarting your purposes, perhaps jeopardizing your safety. What would you naturally do?"

"I'd try to get rid of him."

"Exactly." Coquenil paused, and then, leaning closer to his friend, he said with extraordinary earnestness: "Lucien, for over two years *some one has been trying to get rid of me!*"

"The devil!" started Pougeot. "How long have you known this?"

"Only to-day," frowned the detective. "I ought to have known it long ago."

"Hm! Aren't you building a good deal on that dream?"

"The dream? Heavens, man," snapped

Coquenil, "I'm building *nothing* on the dream and nothing on the girl. She simply brought together two facts that belong together. Why she did it doesn't matter; she did it, and my reason did the rest. There is a connection between this Rio Janeiro offer and my discharge from the force. I know it. I'll show you other links in the chain. Three times in the past two years I have received offers of business positions away from Paris, tempting offers. Notice that—*business positions away from Paris!* Some one has extraordinary reasons for wanting me out of this city and *out of detective work.*"

"And you think this 'some one' was responsible for your discharge from the force?"

"I tell you I know it. M. Giroux, the chief at that time, was distressed at the order, he told me so himself; he said it came from *higher up.*"

The commissary raised incredulous eyebrows. "You mean that Paris has a criminal able to overrule the wishes of a chief of police?"

"Is that harder than to influence the Brazilian Government? Do you think Rio Janeiro offered me a hundred thousand francs a year just for my beautiful eyes?"

"You're a great detective."

"A great detective repudiated by his own city. That's another point: why should the police department discharge me two years ago and recommend me now to a foreign city? Don't you see the same hand behind it all?"

M. Pougeot stroked his gray mustache in puzzled meditation. "It's queer," he admitted; "but I cannot believe that such a criminal exists."

"He isn't known as a criminal—yet," answered Coquenil dryly.

In spite of himself the commissary was impressed. After all, he had seen strange things in his life, and, better than anyone, he had reason to respect the insight of this marvelous mind.

"Then the gist of it is," he resumed uneasily, "you think some great crime is preparing?"

"Don't you?" asked Coquenil abruptly.

"Why—er—" hesitated the other.

"Look at the facts again. Some one wants me off the detective force, out of France. Why? There can be only one

reason—because I have been successful in unraveling intricate crimes, more successful than other men on the force. Is that saying too much?"

The commissary replied impatiently: "It's conceded that you are the most skillful detective in France; but you're off the force already. So why should this person send you to Brazil?"

M. Paul thought a moment. "I have

that? Yes, even now, at this very moment, I am supposed to be on the steamer train, for the boat goes out early in the morning before the *Paris papers* can reach *Cherbourg*."

M. Pougeot started up, his eyes widening. "What!" he cried. "You mean that—that possibly—to-night?"

As he spoke a sudden flash of light came in through the garden window, followed



"I didn't resign; I was discharged."

considered that it is because this crime will be of so startling and unusual a character that it *must* attract my attention if I am here. And if it attracts my attention as a great criminal problem, it is certain that I will try to solve it, whether on the force or off it."

"Well answered!" approved the other; he was coming gradually under the spell of Coquenil's conviction. "And when—when do you think this crime may be committed?"

"Who can say? There must be great urgency to account for their insisting that I sail to-morrow. Ah, you didn't know

by a resounding peal of thunder. The brilliant sunset had been followed by a violent storm.

Coquenil paid no heed to this, but answered quietly: "I mean that a great fight is ahead, and I shall be in it. Somebody is playing for enormous stakes, somebody who disposes of fortune and power and will stop at *nothing*, somebody who will certainly crush me unless I crush him. It will be a great case, Lucien, my greatest case, perhaps my last case." He stopped and looked intently at his mother's picture, while his lips moved inaudibly.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the commissary.

"You've cast a spell over me. Come, come, Paul, it may be only a fancy!"

But Coquenil sat still, his eyes fixed on his mother's face. And then came one of the strange coincidences of this extraordinary case. On the silence of this room, with its tension of overwrought emotion, broke the sharp summons of the telephone.

"My God!" shivered the commissary. "What is that?" And both men sat motionless, their eyes fixed on the ominous instrument.

Again came the call, this time more strident and commanding. M. Pougeot aroused himself with an effort. "We're acting like children," he muttered. "It's nothing. I told them at the office to ring me up about nine." And he put the receiver to his ear. "Yes, this is M. Pougeot. . . . What? . . . The Ansonia? . . . You say he's shot? . . . In a private dining room? . . . Dead? . . . *Quel malheur!*" . . . Then he gave quick orders: "Send Papa Tignol over with a doctor and three or four *agents*. Close the restaurant. Don't let anyone go in or out. Don't let anyone leave the banquet room. I'll be there in twenty minutes. Good-by."

He put the receiver down, and turning, white-faced, said to his friend: "*It has happened.*"

Coquenil glanced at his watch. "A quarter past nine. We must hurry." Then, flinging open a drawer in his desk: "I want this and—*this*. Come, the automobile is waiting."

### CHAPTER III

#### PRIVATE ROOM NUMBER SIX

THE night was black and rain was falling in torrents as Paul Coquenil and the commissary rolled away in response to this startling summons of crime. Up the Rue Mozart they sped with sounding horn, feeling their way carefully on account of troublesome car tracks, then faster up the Avenue Victor Hugo, their advance being accompanied by vivid lightning flashes.

"He was in luck to have this storm," muttered Coquenil. Then, in reply to Pougeot's look: "I mean the thunder, it deadened the shot and gained time for him."

"Him? How do you know a man did it? A woman was in the room, and she's gone. They telephoned that."

The detective shook his head. "No, no, you'll find it's a man. Women are not original in crime. And this is—*this is different*. How many murders can you remember in Paris restaurants, I mean smart restaurants?"

M. Pougeot thought a moment. "There was one at the Silver Pheasant and one at the Pavillion and—and—"

"And one at the Café Rouge. But those were stupid shooting cases, not murders, not planned in advance."

"Why do you think *this* was planned in advance?"

"Because the man escaped."

"They didn't say so."

Coquenil smiled. "That's how I know he escaped. If they had caught him they would have told you, wouldn't they?"

"Why—er—"

"Of course they would. Well, think what it means to commit murder in a crowded restaurant and get away. It means *brains*, Lucien. Ah, we're nearly there!"

They had reached Napoleon's arch, and the automobile, swinging sharply to the right, started at full speed down the Champs Elysées.

"It's bad for Gritz," reflected the commissary; then both men fell silent in the thought of the emergency before them.

M. Gritz, it may be said, was the enterprising proprietor of the Ansonia, this being the last and most brilliant of his creations for cheering the rich and hungry wayfarer. He owned the famous Palace restaurant at Monte Carlo, the Queen's in Picadilly, London, and the Café Royal in Brussels. Of all these ventures, however, this recently opened Ansonia (hotel and restaurant) was by far the most ambitious. The building occupied a full block on the Champs Elysées, just above the Rond Point, so that it was in the center of fashionable Paris. It was the exact copy of a well-known Venetian palace, and its exquisite white marble colonnade made it a real adornment to the gay capital. Furthermore, M. Gritz had spent a fortune on furnishings and decorations, the carvings, the mural paintings, the rugs, the chairs, everything, in short, being up to the best millionaire standard. He had the most high-priced

chef in the world, with six chefs under him, two of whom made a specialty of American dishes. He had his own farm for vegetables and butter, his own vineyards, his own permanent orchestra, and his own brand of Turkish coffee made before your eyes by a salaaming Armenian in native costume. For all of which reasons the present somber happening had particular importance. A murder anywhere was bad enough, but a murder in the newest, the *chic*-est, and the costliest restaurant in Paris must cause more than a nine days' wonder. As M. Pougeot remarked, it was certainly bad for Gritz.

Drawing up before the imposing entrance, they saw two policemen on guard at the doors, one of whom, recognizing the commissary, came forward quickly to the automobile with word that M. Gibelin and two other men from headquarters had already arrived and were proceeding with the investigation.

"Is Papa Tignol here?" asked Coquenil.

"Yes, sir," replied the man, saluting respectfully.

"Before I go in, Lucien, you'd better speak to Gibelin," whispered M. Paul. "It's a little delicate. He's a good detective, but he likes the old school methods, and—he and I never got on very well. He has been sent to take charge of the case, so—be tactful with him."

"He can't object," answered Pougeot. "After all, I'm the commissary of this quarter, and if I need your services——"

"I know, but I'd sooner you spoke to him."

"Good. I'll be back in a moment," and pushing his way through the crowd of sensation seekers that blocked the sidewalk, he disappeared inside the building.

M. Pougeot's moment was prolonged to five full minutes, and when he reappeared his face was black.

"Such stupidity!" he stormed.

"It's what I expected," answered Coquenil.

"Gibelin says you have no business here. He's an impudent devil! 'Tell *Beau Gono*,' he sneered, 'to keep his hands off this case. Orders from headquarters.' I told him you *had* business here, business for me, and—come on, I'll show 'em."

He took Coquenil by the arm, but the latter drew back. "Not yet. I have a

better idea. Go ahead with your report. Never mind me."

"But I want you on the case," insisted the commissary.

"I'll be on the case, all right, but let me try my way first."

"I'll telephone headquarters at once about this," insisted Pougeot. "When shall I see you again?"

Coquenil eyed his friend mysteriously. "I *think* you'll see me before the night is over. Now get to work, and," he smiled mockingly, "give M. Gibelin the assurance of my distinguished consideration."

Pougeot nodded crustily and went back into the restaurant, while Coquenil, with perfect equanimity, paid the automobile man and dismissed him.

Meantime in the large dining rooms on the street floor everything was going on as usual, the orchestra was playing in its best manner and few of the brilliant company suspected that anything was wrong. Those who started to go out were met by M. Gritz himself, and, with a brief hint of trouble upstairs, were assured that they would be allowed to leave shortly after some necessary formalities. This delay most of them took good naturedly and went back to their tables.

As M. Pougeot mounted to the first floor he was met at the head of the stairs by a little yellow-bearded man, with luminous dark eyes, who came toward him, hand extended.

"Ah! Dr. Joubert," said the commissary.

The doctor nodded nervously. "It's a singular case," he whispered, "a very singular case."

At the same moment a door opened and Gibelin appeared. He was rather fat, with small, piercing eyes and a reddish mustache. His voice was harsh, his manners brusque, but there was no denying his intelligence. In a spirit of conciliation he began to give M. Pougeot some details of the case, whereupon the latter said stiffly: "Excuse me, sir, I need no assistance from you in making this investigation. Come, doctor! In the field of his jurisdiction a commissary of police is supreme, taking precedence even over headquarters men." So Gibelin could only withdraw, muttering his resentment, while Pougeot proceeded with his duties.

The general plan of the Ansonia is in the form of a large E. The main part of the

first floor where the tragedy took place was occupied by public dining rooms, but the two wings, in accordance with Parisian custom, contained a number of private rooms where delicious meals might be had with discreet attendance by those who wished to dine alone. In each of the wings were seven of these private rooms, all opening on a dark-red passageway lighted by soft electric lamps. It was in one of the west wing private rooms that the crime had been committed, and as the commissary reached the wing the waiters' awestruck looks showed him plainly enough *which* was the room—there, on the right, the second from the end, where the patient policeman was standing guard.

M. Pougeot paused at the turn of the corridor to ask some question, but he was interrupted by a burst of singing on the left, a roaring chorus of hilarity.

"It's a banquet party," explained the doctor, "a lot of Americans. They don't know what has happened."

"Hah!" reflected the other. "Just across the corridor, too!"

Then, briefly, the commissary heard what the witness had to tell him about the crime. It had been discovered half an hour before, more precisely at ten minutes to nine, by a waiter Joseph, who was serving a couple in Number Six, a dark-complexioned man and a strikingly handsome woman. They had arrived at a quarter before eight and the meal had begun at once. Oddly enough, after the soup, the gentleman told the waiter not to bring the next course until he rang, at the same time slipping into his hand a ten-franc piece. Whereupon Joseph had nodded his understanding—he had seen impatient lovers before, although they usually restrained their ardor until after the fish; still, *ma foi*, this was a woman to make a man lose his head, and the night was to be a jolly one—how those young American devils were singing! "... so *vive l'amour* and *vive la jeunesse!*" With which simple philosophy and a twinkle of satisfaction Joseph had tucked away his gold piece—and waited.

Ten minutes! Fifteen minutes! An unconscionably long time when you have a delicious *sole à la Regence* getting cold on your hands. Joseph knocked discreetly, then again after a decent pause, and finally, weary of waiting, he opened the door with

an official cough of warning and stepped inside the room. A moment later he started back, his eyes fixed with horror.

"*Grand Dieu!*" he cried.

"You saw the body, the man's body?" put in the commissary.

"Yes, sir," answered the waiter, his face still pale at the memory.

"And the woman? Where was the woman?"

"Ah, I forgot," stammered Joseph. "She had come out of the room before this, while I was waiting. She asked where the telephone was, and I told her it was on the floor below. Then she went downstairs—at least I suppose she did, for she never came back."

"Did anyone see her leave the hotel?" questioned Pougeot sharply, looking at the others.

"It's extraordinary," answered the doctor, "but no one seems to have seen this woman go out. M. Gibelin made inquiries, but he could learn nothing except that she really went to the telephone booth. The girl there remembers her."

Again Pougeot turned to the waiter.

"What sort of a woman was she? A lady or—or not?"

Joseph clucked his tongue admiringly. "She was a lady, all right. And a stunner! Eyes and—shoulders and—um-m!" He described imaginary feminine curves with the unction of a male dressmaker. "Oh, there's one thing more!"

"You can tell me later. Now, doctor, we'll look at the room. I'll need you, Leroy, and you and you." He motioned to his secretary and to two of his men.

Dr. Joubert, bowing gravely, opened the door of Number Six, and the commissary entered, followed by his scribe, a very bald and pale young man, and by the two policemen. Then came the doctor, closing the door carefully behind him.

It was the commissary's custom on arriving at the scene of a crime to record his first impressions immediately, taking careful note of every fact and detail in the picture that seemed to have the slightest bearing on the case. These he would dictate rapidly to his secretary, walking back and forth, searching everywhere with keen eyes and trained intelligence, especially for signs of violence, a broken window, an overturned table, a weapon; and noting all suspicious



stains—mud stains, blood stains, the print of a foot, the smear of a hand and, of course, describing carefully the appearance of a victim's body, the wounds, the position, the expression of the face, any tearing or disorder of the garments. Many times these quick, haphazard jottings, made in the precious moments following a crime, had proved of incalculable value to the subsequent investigation.

In the present case, however, M. Pougeot was fairly taken aback by the lack of significant material. Everything in the room was as it should be, table spread with snowy linen, its two places set faultlessly among flowers and flashing glasses, chairs in their places, pictures smiling down from the white-and-gold walls, shaded electric lights diffusing a pleasant glow—in short, no disorder, no sign of struggle; yet there, stretched at full length on the floor near a pale yellow sofa, lay a man in evening dress, his head resting, face downward, in a little red pool. He was evidently dead.

"Has anything been disturbed here? Has anyone touched this body?" demanded Pougeot sharply.

"No," said the doctor; "Gibelin came in with me, but neither of us touched anything. We waited for you."

"I see. Ready, Leroy," and he proceeded to dictate what there was to say, dwelling on two facts: that there was no sign of a weapon in the room and that the long double window opening on the Rue Marbœuf was standing open.

"Now, doctor," he concluded, "we will look at the body."

Dr. Joubert's examination established at once the direct cause of death. The man, a well-built young fellow of perhaps twenty-eight, had been shot in the right eye, a ball having penetrated the brain, killing him instantly. The face showed marks of flame and powder, proving that the weapon—undoubtedly a pistol—had been discharged from a very short distance.

This certainly looked like suicide, although the absence of the pistol pointed to murder. The man's face was perfectly calm, with no suggestion of fright or anger; his hands and body lay in a natural position and his clothes were in no way disordered. Either he had met death willingly, or it had come to him without warning, like a lightning stroke.

"Doctor," asked the commissary, glancing at the open window, "if this man shot himself, could he, in your opinion, with his last strength have thrown the pistol out there?"

"Certainly not," answered Joubert. "A man who received a wound like this would be dead before he could lift a hand, before he could wink."

"Ah!"

"Besides, a search has been made underneath that window and no pistol has been found."

"It must be murder," muttered Pougeot. "Was there any quarreling with the woman?"

"Joseph says not. On the contrary, they seemed on the friendliest terms."

"Hah! See what he has on his person. Note everything down. We must find out who this poor fellow was."

These instructions were carefully carried out, and it straightway became clear that robbery, at any rate, had no part in the crime. In the dead man's pockets was found a considerable sum of money, a bundle of five-pound notes of the Bank of England besides a handful of French gold. On his fingers were several valuable rings, in his scarf was a large ruby set with diamonds, and attached to his waistcoat was a massive gold medal which at once established his identity. He was Enrico Martinez, a Spaniard widely known as a professional billiard player, and also the hero of the terrible Charity Bazaar fire, where, at the risk of his life, he had saved several women from the flames. For this bravery the city of Paris had awarded him a gold medal and people had praised him until his head was half turned.

So familiar a figure was Martinez that there was no difficulty in finding witnesses in the restaurant able to identify him positively as the dead man. Several had seen him within a few days at the Olympia billiard academy, where he had been practicing for a much-advertised match with an American rival. All agreed that Martinez was quite the last man in Paris to take his own life, for the simple reason that he enjoyed it altogether too much. He was scarcely thirty and in excellent health, he made plenty of money, he was fond of pleasure, and particularly fond of the ladies and had no reason to complain of bad treatment at





"On the floor lay a man."

their hands; in fact, if the truth must be told, he was ridiculously vain of his conquests among the fair sex, and was always saying to whoever would listen: "Ah, *mon cher*, I have met a woman! But *such* a woman!" Then his dark eyes would glow and he would snap his thumb nail under an upper tooth, with an expression of ravishing joy that only a Castilian billiard player could assume. And, of course, it was always a different woman!

"Aha!" muttered the commissary. "There may be a husband mixed up in this. Call that waiter again, and—er—we will continue the examination outside."

With this they removed to the adjoining private room, Number Five, leaving a policeman at the door of Number Six until proper disposal of the body should be made.

In the further questioning of Joseph the commissary brought out several important facts. The waiter testified that, after serving the soup to Martinez and the lady, he had not left the corridor outside the door of Number Six until the moment when he

entered the room and discovered the crime. During this interval of perhaps a quarter of an hour he had moved down the corridor a short distance, but not farther than the door of Number Five. He was sure of this because one of the doors to the banquet room was just opposite the door of Number Five, and he had stood there listening to a Fourth-of-July speaker who was discussing the relations between France and America. Joseph, being something of a politician, was greatly interested in this.

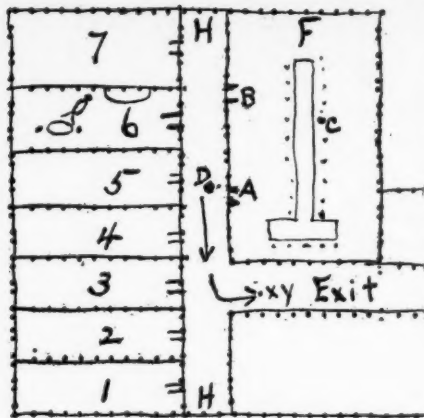
"Then this banquet-room door was open?" questioned Pougeot.

"Yes, sir, it was open about a foot—some of the guests wanted air."

"How did you stand as you listened to the speaker? Show me." M. Pougeot led Joseph to the banquet-room door.

"Like this," answered the waiter, and he placed himself so that his back was turned to Number Six.

"So you would not have seen, anyone who might have come out of Number Six at that time or gone into Number Six?"



*West Wing of Ansonia Hotel—First Floor.*

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Private dining rooms opening on corridor H H.

No. 6. Private dining room where body was found.

F. Large dining room occupied at time of tragedy by Americans gathered at Fourth of July banquet.

C. Seat at banquet occupied by Kittredge and left vacant by him.

A, B. Two doors opening into corridor from banquet room.

D. Point in corridor where the waiter Joseph stood with back turned to No. 6 while he looked through door A during Fourth of July speeches.

X, Y. Arrows show direction taken by man and woman who passed Joseph in corridor going out.

"I suppose not."

"And if the door of Number Six had opened while your back was turned, would you have heard it?"

Joseph shook his head. "No, sir; there was a lot of applauding—like that," he paused as a roar of laughter came from across the hall.

The commissary turned quickly to one of his men. "See that they make less noise. And be careful no one leaves the banquet room on any excuse. I'll be there presently." Then to the waiter: "Did you hear any sound from Number Six? Anything like a shot?"

"No, sir."

"Hm! It must have been the thunder. Now tell me this, could anyone have passed you in the corridor while you stood at the banquet-room door without your knowing it?"

Joseph's round, red face spread into a

grin. "The corridor is narrow, sir, and I"—he looked down complacently at his ample form—"I pretty well fill it up, don't I, sir?"

"You certainly do. Give me a sheet of paper." And with a few rapid pencil strokes the commissary drew a rough plan of the banquet room, the corridor, and the seven private dining rooms. He marked carefully the two doors leading from the banquet room into the corridor, the one where Joseph listened, opposite Number Five, and the one opposite Number Six.

"Here you are, blocking the corridor at Number Five"; he made a mark on the plan at that point. "By the way, are there any other exits from the banquet room except these two corridor doors?"

"No, sir."

"Good! Now pay attention. While you were listening at this door—I'll mark it A—with your back turned to Number Six, a person *might* have left the banquet room by the farther door—I'll mark it B—and stepped across the corridor into Number Six without your seeing him. Isn't that true?"

"Yes, sir, it's possible."

"Or a person *might* have gone into Number Six from either Number Five or Number Seven without your seeing him?"

"Excuse me, there was no one in Number Five during that fifteen minutes, and the party who had engaged Number Seven did not come."

"Ah! Then if any stranger went into Number Six during that fifteen minutes he must have come from the banquet room?"

"Yes, sir."

"By this door, B?"

"That's the only way he could have come without my seeing him."

"And if he went out from Number Six afterwards, I mean if he left the hotel, he must have passed you in the corridor?"

"Exactly." Joseph's face was brightening.

"Now, *did* anyone pass you in the corridor, anyone except the lady?"

"Yes, sir," answered the waiter eagerly, "a young man passed me."

"Going out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you know where he came from?"

"I supposed he came from the banquet room."

"Did this happen before the lady went out, or after?"

"Before."

"Can you describe this young man, Joseph?"

The waiter frowned and rubbed his red neck. "I think I shall know him, he was slender and clean shaven—yes, I'm sure I should know him."

"Did anyone else pass you, either going out or coming in?"

"No, sir."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely sure."

"That will do."

Joseph heaved a high of relief and was just passing out when the commissary cried out, with a startled expression: "A thousand thunders! Wait! That woman—what did she wear?"

The waiter turned eagerly. "Why, a beautiful evening gown, sir, cut low with a lot of lace and—"

"No, no. I mean, what did she wear outside? Her wraps? Weren't they in Number Six?"

"No, sir, they were downstairs in the cloak room."

"In the cloak room!" He bounded to his feet. "*Bon sang de bon Dieu!* Quick! Fool! Don't you understand?"

This outburst stirred Joseph to unexampled efforts; he fairly hurled his massive body down the stairs, and a few moments later returned, panting but happy, with news that the lady in Number Six had left a cloak and leather bag in the cloak room. These articles were still there.

"Ah, that is something!" murmured the commissary, and he hurried down to see the things for himself.

The cloak was of yellow silk, embroidered in white, a costly garment from a fashionable maker; but there was nothing to indicate the wearer. The bag was a luxurious trifle in Brazilian lizard skin, with solid gold mountings; but again there was no clue to the owner, no name, no cards, only some samples of dress goods, a little money, and an unmarked handkerchief.

"Don't move these things," directed M. Pougeot. "It's possible some one will call for them, and if anyone *should* call, why—that's Gibelin's affair. Now we'll see these Americans."

It was now a quarter past ten, and the

hilarity of proceedings at the Fourth of July banquet (no ladies present) had reached its height. A very French-looking student from Bridgeport, Connecticut, had just started an uproarious rendering of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," with Latin Quarter variations, when there came a sudden hush and a turning of heads toward the half-open door, through which a voice was heard in peremptory command. Something had happened, something serious, if one could judge by the face of François, the head waiter, who stood at the corridor entrance.

"Not so fast," he insisted, holding them back, and a moment later there entered a florid-faced man, with authoritative mien, closely followed by two policemen.

"Horns of a purple cow!" muttered the Bridgeport art student, who loved eccentric oaths. "The house is pulled!"

"Gentlemen," began M. Pougeot, while the company listened in startled silence, "I am sorry to interrupt this pleasant gathering, especially as I understand that you are celebrating your national holiday; unfortunately, I have a duty to perform that admits of no delay. While you have been feasting and singing, as becomes your age and the occasion, an act of violence has taken place within the sound of your voices—I may say under cover of your voices."

He paused and swept his eyes in keen scrutiny over the faces before him, as if trying to read in one or the other of them the answer to some question not yet asked.

"My friends," he continued, and now his look became almost menacing, "I am here as an officer of the law because I have reason to believe that a guest at this banquet is connected with a crime committed in this restaurant within the last hour or two."

So extraordinary was this accusation and so utterly unexpected that for some moments no one spoke. Then, after the first dismay, came indignant protests; this man had a nerve to break in on a gathering of American citizens with a fairy tale like that!

"Silence!" rang out the commissary's voice sharply. "Who sat there?" He pointed to a vacant seat at the long central table.

All eyes turned to this empty chair, and heads came together in excited whispers.

"Bring me a plan of the tables," he continued, and when this was spread before him: "I will read off the names marked here, and each one of you will please answer."

In tense silence he called the names, and to each one came a quick "Here!" until he said "Kittredge!"

There was no answer.

"Lloyd Kittredge!" he repeated, and still no one spoke.

"Ah!" he muttered and went on calling names, but no one else was missing.

"All here but M. Kittredge. He *was* here, and—he went out. I must know why he went out, I must know when he went out—exactly when; I must know how he acted before he left, what he said—in short, I must know all you can tell me about him. Remember, the best service you can render your friend is to speak freely. If he is innocent the truth will protect him."

Then began a wearisome questioning of witnesses, not very fruitful either, for these Americans developed a surprising ignorance touching their fellow countryman and all that concerned him. It must have been about nine o'clock when he went out, perhaps a few minutes earlier. No, there had been nothing peculiar in his actions or manner; in fact, most of the guests had not even noticed his absence.

As to Kittredge's life and personality the result was scarcely more satisfactory. He had appeared in Paris about a year before, just why was not known, and had passed as a good fellow, perhaps a little wild and hot-headed. Strangely enough, no one could say where Kittredge lived; he had left rather expensive rooms near the boulevards that he had occupied at first, and since then he had almost disappeared from his old haunts. Some said that his money had given out and he had gone to work, but this was only vague rumor.

These facts having been duly recorded, the banqueters were informed that they might depart, which they did in silence, the spirit of festivity having vanished.

Inquiries were now made about Kittredge's movements in the hotel, but noth-

ing came to light except the statement of a big, liveried doorkeeper, who remembered distinctly the sudden appearance at about nine o'clock of a young man who was very anxious to get a cab. The storm was then at its height, and the doorkeeper had advised the young man to wait, feeling sure the tempest would cease as suddenly as it had begun; but the latter, apparently ill at ease, had insisted that he must go at once; he said he could find a cab himself, and turning up his collar so that his face was almost hidden, and drawing his thin overcoat tight about his evening dress, he dashed into the black downpour, and a moment later the doorkeeper, surprised at this eccentric behavior, saw the young man hail a passing *fiacre* and drive away.

At this point in the investigation the unexpected happened. One of the policemen burst in to say that some one had called for the lady's cloak and bag. It was a young man with a check for the things; he was waiting for them now in the cloak room and he seemed nervous.

"Well?" snapped the commissary.

"I was going to arrest him, sir," replied the other eagerly, "but——"

"Will you never learn your business? Does Gibelin know this?"

"Yes, sir, we just told him."

"Send Joseph here—quick." And to the waiter when he appeared: "Tell the woman in the cloak room to let this young man have the things. Don't let him see that you are suspicious, but take a good look at him."

"Yes, sir. And then?"

"And then nothing. Leave him to Gibelin."

A moment later Joseph returned to say that he had absolutely recognized the young man downstairs as the one who had passed him in the corridor, and François was positive he was the missing banquet guest. In other words, they were facing this remarkable situation: that the cloak and leather bag left by the mysterious woman of Number Six had now been called for by the very man against whom suspicion was rapidly growing—Lloyd Kittredge himself.

(To be continued.)



## ARMY LETTERS FROM AN OFFICER'S WIFE

BY FRANCES M. A. ROE

*THIRTY-EIGHT* years ago a young army officer, just graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, went with his bride to begin service on the Western frontier. Into this new life of an army post the young girl from the East found herself plunged, with buffalo hunts and sand storms, Indian raids and bandits but casual incidents of the day. Fortunately her letters to her family were preserved, and from these Mrs. Roe has permitted APPLETON'S MAGAZINE to select the material for this article and others that are to follow. The freshness of her impressions of a life and conditions now practically past, the naïve and courageous optimism of the young wife in such unfamiliar surroundings, give to the letters a quality of intimate human interest and value rarely excelled in such material.—THE EDITOR.

FORT LYON, COLORADO TERRITORY,  
October, 1871.



THE months of anticipation and days of weary travel are over and we have at last got to our army home! As you know, the Post is fifty miles from Kit Carson, and we came all that distance in a funny looking stagecoach called a "Jerkey," and a good name for it, too, for at times it seesawed back and forth and then sideways, in an awful breakneck way. The

day was glorious, and the atmosphere so clear we could see miles and miles in every direction. But there was not one object to be seen on the vast rolling prairie—not a tree or a house, except the wretched ranch and stockade where we got fresh horses and a perfectly uneatable dinner.

It was dark when we reached the Post, so of course we could see nothing that night. General and Mrs. P—— gave us a most cordial welcome—just as though they had known us always. Dinner was served soon after we arrived, and the cheerful din-



ing room, and the table with its dainty china and bright silver, was such a surprise—so much nicer than anything we had expected to find here, and all so different from the terrible places we had seen since reaching the plains. General P—— is not a real general—only so by brevet, for gallant service during the war. I was so disappointed when I was told this, but F—— says that he is very much afraid that I will have cause, sooner or later, to think that the grade of captain is quite high enough. He thinks this way because, having graduated at West Point this year, he is only a second lieutenant just now.

It seems that in the army lieutenants are called "Mister" always, but all other officers must be addressed by their rank. At least that is what they tell me. But in F——'s company, the captain is called general, and the first lieutenant is called major, and as this is most confusing, I get things mixed sometimes. Most girls would. A soldier in uniform waited upon us at dinner, and that seemed so funny. I wanted to watch him all the time, which distracted me, I suppose, for once I called General P—— "Mister!" It so happened, too, that just that instant there was not a sound in the room, so everyone heard the blunder. General P—— straightened back in his chair, and his little son gave a smothered giggle—for which he should have been sent to bed at once. But that was not all! That soldier, who had been so dignified and stiff, put his hand over his mouth and fairly rushed from the room so he could laugh outright. And how I longed to run some place, too—but not to laugh, oh, no!

These soldiers are not nearly as nice as you would suppose them to be, when you see them dressed up in their blue uniforms with bright brass buttons. And they can make mistakes, too, for yesterday, when I asked that same man a question, he answered, "Yes, sorr!" Then I smiled, of course, but he did not seem to have enough sense to see why. When I told F—— about it, he looked vexed and said I must never laugh at an enlisted man—that it was not dignified in the wife of an officer to do so. And then I told him that an officer should teach an enlisted man not to snicker at his wife, and not call her "Sorr," which was disrespectful. I wanted to say more, but F—— suddenly left the room.

The Post is not at all as you and I had imagined it to be. There is no high wall around it as there is at Fort Trumbull. It reminds one of a prim little village built around a square, in the center of which is a high flagstaff and a big cannon. The buildings are very low and broad, and are made of adobe—a kind of clay and mud mixed together,—and the walls are very thick. At every window are heavy wooden shutters, that can be closed during severe sand and wind storms.

Yesterday morning—our first here—we were awakened by the sounds of fife and drum that became louder and louder, until finally I thought the whole army must be marching to the house. I stumbled over everything in the room in my haste to get to one of the little dormer windows, but there was nothing to be seen, as it was still quite dark. The drumming became less loud, and then ceased altogether, when a big gun was fired that must have wasted any amount of powder, for it shook the house and made all the windows rattle. Then three or four bugles played a little air, which it was impossible to hear because of the horrible howling and crying of dogs—such howls of misery you never heard—they made me shiver. This all suddenly ceased, and immediately there were lights flashing some distance away, and dozens of men seemed to be talking all at the same time, some of them shouting, "Here!" "Here!" I began to think that perhaps Indians had come upon us, and called to F——, who informed me in a sleepy voice that it was only reveille roll call, and that each man was answering to his name. There was the same performance this morning, and at breakfast I asked General P—— why soldiers required such a beating of drums, and deafening racket generally, to awaken them in the morning. But he did not tell me—said it was an old army custom to have the drums beaten along the officers' walk at reveille.

Much of the furniture in this house was made by soldier carpenters here in the Post, and is not only very nice, but cost General P—— almost nothing, and, as we have to buy everything, I said at dinner last evening that we must have some precisely like it, supposing, of course, that General P—— would feel highly gratified because his taste was admired. But instead of the smile and



gracious acquiescence I had expected, there was another straightening back in the chair, and a silence that was ominous and chilling. Finally, he recovered sufficient breath to tell me that at present there are no good carpenters in the company.

F—— is wonderfully amiable about it, and assures me that when he gets to be a captain I will see that it is just and fair. But I happen to remember that he told me not long ago that he might not get his captaincy for twenty years.

were simply, and only, painted, dirty, and nauseous-smelling savages!

We went to Las Animas yesterday, Mrs. P——, Mrs. C——, and I, to do a little shopping. There are several small stores in the half-Mexican village, where can often be found curious little things from Mexico, if one does not mind poking about underneath the trash and dirt that is every place. While we were in the largest of these shops ten or twelve Indians dashed up to the door on their ponies, and four of



*"He was riding close to the buffalo."*

FORT LYON, COLORADO TERRITORY,  
October, 1871.

When a very small girl, I was told many wonderful tales about a grand Indian chief called "Red Jacket," by great-grandmother, who, you will remember, saw him a number of times when she, also, was a small girl. And since then—almost all my life—I have wanted to see with my very own eyes an Indian—a real noble red man—dressed in beautiful skins embroidered with beads, and on his head long, waving feathers.

Well, I have seen an Indian—a number of Indians—but they were not Red Jackets, neither were they noble red men. They

them, slipping down, came in the store and passed on quickly to the counter farthest back, where the ammunition is kept.

Their coming was so sudden we did not have a chance to get out of their way, and it so happened that Mrs. P—— and I were in their line of march, and when the one in the lead got to us we were pushed aside with such impatient force that we both fell over on the counter. The others passed on just the same, however, and if we had fallen to the floor, I presume they would have stepped over us, and otherwise been oblivious to our existence. This was my introduction to an Indian—the noble red man!

As soon as they got to the counter they demanded powder, balls, and percussion caps, and as these things were given them, they were stuffed down their muzzle-loading rifles, and whatever could not be rammed down the barrels was put in greasy skin bags and hidden under their blankets. I saw one test the sharp edge of a long, wicked-looking knife, and then it also disappeared under his blanket. All this time the other Indians were on their ponies in front, watching every move that was being made around them.

There was only the one small door to the little adobe shop, and in this an Indian had ridden his piebald pony; its forefeet were up a step on the sill and its head and shoulders were in the room; which made it quite impossible for us three frightened women to run out in the street. So we got back of a counter and, as Mrs. P—— expressed it, "midway between the devil and the deep sea." There certainly could be no mistake about the "devil" side of it!

It was an awful situation to be in, and one to terrify anybody. We were actually prisoners—penned in with all those savages, who were evidently in an ugly mood, with quantities of ammunition within their reach, and only two white men to protect us.

Well, when those inside had been given, or had helped themselves to whatever they wanted, out they all marched again, quickly and silently, just as they had come in. They instantly mounted their ponies, and all rode down the street and out of sight at race speed, some leaning so far over on their little beasts that one could hardly see the Indian at all.

The storekeeper told us that those Indians were Utes, and were greatly excited because they had just heard there was a small party of Cheyennes down the river two or three miles. The Utes and Cheyennes are bitter enemies. He said that the Utes were very cross—ready for the blood of Indian or white man—therefore he had permitted them to do about as they pleased while in the store, particularly as we were there, and he saw that we were frightened. That young man did not know that his own swarthy face was a greenish white all the time those Indians were in the store! Not one penny did they pay for the things they carried off. Only two years ago the entire Ute nation was on the warpath, killing

every white person they came across, and one must have much faith in Indians to believe that their "change of heart" has been so complete that these Utes have learned to love the white man in so short a time.

No! There was hatred in their eyes as they approached us in that store, and there was restrained murder in the hand that pushed Mrs. P—— and me over. They were all hideous—with streaks of red or green paint on their faces that made them look like fiends. Their hair was roped with strips of bright-colored stuff, and hung down on each side of their shoulders in front, and on the crown of each black head was a small, tightly plaited lock, ornamented at the top with a feather, a piece of tin, or something fantastic. These were their scalp locks. They wore blankets over dirty old shirts, and of course had on long, trouserlike, leggings of skin and moccasins. They were not tall, but rather short and stocky. The odor of those skins and of the Indians themselves, in that stuffy little shop, I expect to smell the rest of my life!

We heard this morning that those very savages rode out on the prairie in a roundabout way, so as to get in advance of the Cheyennes, and then had hidden themselves on the top of a bluff overlooking the trail they knew the Cheyennes to be following, and had fired upon them as they passed below, killing two and wounding a number of others. You can see how treacherous these Indians are, and how very far from "noble" is their method of warfare! Oh, Red Jacket! Oh, Cooper! How could you—how could you!

FORT LYON, COLORADO TERRITORY,  
November, 1871.

In many of my letters I have written about learning to ride and to shoot, and have told you also of having followed the greyhounds after coyotes and rabbits with F—— and Lieutenant B——. These hunts exact the very best of riding and a fast horse, for coyotes are very swift, and so are jack rabbits, too; and one look at a greyhound will tell anyone that he can run—and about twice as fast as the big-eared foxhounds in the East. But I started to write you about something quite different from all this—to tell you of a really grand hunt I have been on—a splendid chase after buffalo!

A week or so ago it was decided that a party of enlisted men should be sent out to get buffalo meat for Thanksgiving dinner for everybody—officers and enlisted men—and that Lieutenant B——, who is an experienced hunter, should command the detail. You can imagine how proud and delighted I was when asked to go with them.

The day was very cold, with a strong wind blowing, so I wore one of F——'s citizen caps, with tabs tied down over my ears, and a large silk handkerchief around my neck, all of which did not improve my looks in the least, but it was quite in keeping with the dressing of the officers, who had on buckskin shirts, with handkerchiefs, leggings, and moccasins.

Well, we rode twelve miles without seeing one living thing, and then we came to a little adobe ranch where we dismounted to rest a while. By this time our feet and hands were almost frozen, and F—— suggested that I should remain at the ranch until they returned; but that I refused to do—to give up the hunt was not to be thought of, particularly as a ranchman had just told us that a small herd of buffalo had been seen that very morning only two miles farther on.

We must have gone at least three miles farther before we saw them, making fifteen or sixteen miles altogether that we had ridden. The buffalo were grazing quietly along a meadow in between low, rolling hills. We immediately fell back a short distance and waited for the wagons, and when they came up there was great activity, I assure you. The officers' saddles were transferred to their hunters, and the men who were to join in the chase got their horses and rifles ready. Lieutenant B—— gave his instructions to everybody, and all started off, each one going in a different direction so as to form a *cordon*, F—— said, around the whole herd. F—— would not join in the hunt, but remained with me the entire day. He and I rode over the hill, stopping when we got where we could command a good view of the valley and watch the run.

It seemed only a few minutes when we saw the buffalo start, going from some of the men, of course, who at once began to chase them. This kept them running straight ahead, and, fortunately, in Lieutenant B——'s direction, who apparently was

holding his horse in, waiting for them to come. We saw through our field glasses that as soon as they got near enough he made a quick dash for the herd, and cutting one out, had turned it so it was headed straight for us.

Now, being on a buffalo hunt a safe distance off, was one thing, but to have one of those huge animals come thundering along like a steam engine directly for you was quite another. I was on one of Lieutenant B——'s horses, too, and I felt that there might be danger of his bolting to his companion Tom, when he saw him dashing by, and as I was not anxious to join in a buffalo chase just at that time, I begged F—— to go with me farther up the hill. But he would not go back one step, assuring me that my horse was a trained hunter and accustomed to such sights.

Lieutenant B—— gained steadily on the buffalo, and in a wonderfully short time both passed directly in front of us—within a hundred feet F—— said. Lieutenant B—— was close upon him then, his horse looking very small and slender by the side of the grand animal that was taking easy, swinging strides, apparently without effort and without speed, his tongue lolling at one side. But we could see that the pace was really terrific—that Lieutenant B—— was freely using the spur, and that his swift thoroughbred was stretched out like a greyhound, straining every muscle in his effort to keep up. Lieutenant B—— was riding close to the buffalo on his left, with revolver in his right hand, and I wondered why he did not shoot, but F—— said it would be useless to fire then—that Lieutenant B—— must get up nearer the shoulder, as a buffalo is vulnerable only in certain parts of his body, and that a hunter of experience like Lieutenant B—— would never think of shooting unless he could aim at heart or lungs.

Lieutenant B—— and the buffalo were soon far away, and when our horses had quieted down we recalled that shots had been fired in another direction, and looking about we saw a comical sight. Lieutenant A—— was on his horse, and facing him was an immense buffalo, standing perfectly still with chin drawn in and horns to the front, ready for battle. It was plain to be seen that the poor horse was not enjoying the meeting, for every now and then he

would try to back away, or give a jump sideways. The buffalo was wounded and unable to run, but he could still turn around fast enough to keep his head toward the horse, and this he did every time Lieutenant A—— tried to get an aim at his side.

There was no possibility of his killing him without assistance, and of course the poor beast could not be abandoned in such a helpless condition, so F—— decided to go over and worry him, while Lieutenant A—— got in the fatal shot. As soon as F—— got there I put my fingers over my ears so I would not hear the report of the pistol. After a while I looked across, and there was the buffalo still standing, and both F—— and Lieutenant A—— were beckoning for me to come to them. At first I could not understand what they wanted, and I started to go over, but it finally dawned upon me that they were actually waiting for me to come and kill that buffalo! It was Lieutenant A——'s game, and besides, I saw no glory in shooting a wounded animal, so I turned my horse back again, but had not gone far before I heard the pistol shot.

Then I rode over to see the huge animal, and found F—— and Lieutenant A—— in a state of great excitement. They said he was a magnificent specimen—unusually large, and very black—what they call a "blue skin," with a splendid head and beard. I had been exposed to a bitterly cold wind without the warming exercise of riding, for over an hour, and my hands were so cold and stiff I could scarcely hold the reins, so they jumped me up on the shoulders of the warm body, and I buried my hands in the long fur on his neck.

Very soon after that F—— and I came on home, reaching the Post about seven o'clock. We had been in our saddles most of the time for twelve hours, on a cold day, and were tired and stiff, and when F—— tried to assist me from my horse I fell to the ground in a heap. But I got through the day very well, considering the very short time I have been riding—that is, really riding. The hunt was a grand sight, and something that probably I will never have a chance of seeing again—and to be honest, I do not want to see another, for the sight of one of those splendid animals running for his life is not a pleasant one.

FORT LYON, COLORADO TERRITORY,  
December, 1871.

Our first Christmas on the frontier was ever so pleasant, but it certainly was most vexatious not to have that box from home. And I expect that it has been at Kit Carson for days, waiting to be brought down. We had quite a little Christmas without it, however, for a number of things came from the girls, and several women of the garrison sent pretty little gifts to me. It was so kind and thoughtful in them to remember that I might be a bit homesick just now. All the little presents were spread out on a table, and in a way to make them present as fine an appearance as possible. Then I printed in large letters, on a piece of cardboard, "One box—contents unknown!" and stood it up on the back of the table. I did this to let everyone know that we had not been forgotten by home people.

They have such a charming custom in the army of going along the line Christmas morning and giving each other pleasant greetings and looking at the pretty things everyone has received. This is a rare treat out here, where we are so far from shops and beautiful Christmas displays. We all went to the "bachelors'" quarters, almost everyone taking over some little remembrance—homemade candy, cakes, or something of that sort.

I had a splendid cake to send over that morning, and I will tell you just what happened to it. At home we always had a large fruit cake made for the holidays, long in advance, and I thought I would have one this year as near like it as possible. But it seemed that the only way to get it was to make it. So, about four weeks ago, I commenced. It was quite an undertaking for me, as I had never done anything of the kind, and perhaps I did not go about it the easiest way, but I knew how it should look when done, and of course I knew precisely how it should taste.

Well, for two long, tiresome days I worked over that cake, preparing with my own fingers every bit of the fruit, which I consider was a fine test of perseverance and "staying" qualities. After the ingredients were all mixed together there seemed to be enough for a whole regiment, so we decided to make two cakes of it. They looked lovely when baked, and just right, and smelled so good, too! I wrapped them in nice



*"He grasped my bridle rein on the right."*

white paper that had been wet with brandy, and put them carefully away—one in a stone jar, the other in a tin box—and felt that I had done a remarkably fine bit of housekeeping. The bachelors have been exceedingly kind to me, and I rejoiced at having a nice cake to send them Christmas morning. But, alas! I forgot that the little house was fragrant with the odor of spice and fruit, and that there was a man about who was ever on the lookout for good things to eat. It is a shame that those cadets at West Point are so starved. They seem to be simply famished for months after they graduate.

It so happened that there was choir practice that very evening, and that I was at the chapel an hour or so. When I returned, I found the three bachelors sitting around the open fire, smoking, and looking very comfortable indeed. Before I was quite in the room they all stood up and began to praise the cake. I think F— was the first to mention it, saying it was a "great success"; then the others said "Perfectly delicious," and so on, but at the same time assuring me that a large piece had been left for me.

For one minute I stood still, not in the

least grasping their meaning, but finally I suspected mischief, they all looked so serenely contented. So I passed on to the dining room, and there, on the table, was one of the precious cakes—at least what was left of it, the very small piece that had been so generously saved for me. And there were plates with crumbs, and napkins, that told the rest of the sad tale—and there was wine and empty glasses, also. Oh, yes! Their early Christmas had been a fine one. There was nothing for me to say or do—at least not just then—so I went back to the little living room and forced myself to be halfway pleasant to the four men who sat there, each one looking precisely like the cat after it had eaten the canary!

The commanding officer gave a dancing party Friday evening that was most enjoyable. He is a widower, you know. His house is large, and the rooms of good size, so that dancing was comfortable. The music consisted of one violin with accordion accompaniment. This would seem absurd in the East, but I can assure you that one accordion, when played well by a German, is an orchestra in itself. And Doos plays very well. The girls East may have better



music to dance by, and polished waxed floors to slip down upon, but they cannot have the excellent partners one has at an army post, and I choose the partners!

The officers are excellent dancers—every one of them—and when you are gliding around, your chin, or perhaps your nose, getting a scratch now and then from a gorgeous gold epaulet, you feel as light as a feather, and imagine yourself with a fairy prince.

FORT LYON, COLORADO TERRITORY,  
January, 1872.

When we came over on the stage from Kit Carson last fall I sat on top with the driver, who told me of many terrible experiences he had passed through during the years he had been driving a stage on the plains, and some of the most thrilling were of sand storms, when he had, with great difficulty, saved the stage and perhaps his own life. There have been ever so many storms, since we have been here, that covered everything in the houses with dust and sand, but nothing at all like those the driver described. But yesterday one came—a terrific storm—and it so happened that I was caught out in the fiercest part of it.

As F—— was officer of the day, he could not leave the Post, so I rode with Lieutenant B—— and Lieutenant A——. The day was glorious—sunny, and quite warm—one of Colorado's very best, without a cloud to be seen in any direction. We went up the river to the mouth of a pretty little stream commonly called "The Picket Wire," but the real name of which is "La Purgatoire."

The canter up was brisk, and after giving our horses the drink from the running stream they always beg for, we started back on the road to the Post in unusually fine spirits. Almost immediately, however, Lieutenant B—— said, "I do not like the looks of that cloud over there!" We glanced back in the direction he pointed, and seeing only a streak of dark gray low on the horizon, Lieutenant A—— and I paid no more attention to it. But Lieutenant B—— was very silent, and ever looking back at the queer gray cloud.

When about two miles from the Post, Lieutenant B——, who had fallen back a little, called to us, "Put your horses to their best pace—a sand storm is coming!"

Then we knew there was a possibility of much danger, for Lieutenant B—— is known to be a keen observer, and our confidence in his judgment was great, so, without once looking back to see what was coming after us, Lieutenant A—— and I started our horses on a full run.

Well, that cloud increased in size with a rapidity you could never imagine, and soon the sun was obscured as if by an eclipse. It became darker and darker, and by the time we got opposite the Post Trader's there could be heard a loud, continuous roar, resembling that of a heavy waterfall.

Just then Lieutenant B—— grasped my bridle rein on the right and told Lieutenant A—— to ride close on my left, which was done not a second too soon, for as we reached the officer's line the storm struck us, and with such force, I was almost swept from my saddle. The wind was terrific and going at hurricane speed, and the air so thick with sand and dirt we could not see the ears of our own horses. The world seemed to have narrowed to a space that was appalling!

Lieutenant B——'s voice sounded strange and far, far away when he called to me, "Sit tight in your saddle and do not jump!" And then again he fairly yelled, "We must stay together and keep the horses from stampeding to the stables!" He was afraid they would break away and dash us against the iron supports to the flagstaff in the center of the parade ground. How he could say one word, or even open his mouth, I do not understand, with the air so thick with gritty dirt. The horses were frantic, of course, whirling around each other, rearing and pulling, in their efforts to get free.

We must have stayed in about the same place twenty minutes or longer, when, just for one instant, there was a lull in the storm, and I caught a glimpse of the white pickets of a fence! Without stopping to think of horses' hoofs and, alas! without calling one word to the two officers who were doing everything possible to protect me, I shut my eyes tight, freed my foot from the stirrup, and, sliding down from my horse, started for those pickets! How I missed Lieutenant A——'s horse, and how I got to that fence, I do not know. The force of the wind was terrific, and besides, I was obliged to cross the little *acéquia*. But I did get over the fifteen or sixteen

feet of ground without falling, and oh! the joy of getting my arms around those pickets!

The storm continued for some time; but finally the atmosphere began to clear, and I could see objects around me. And then out of the dust loomed up Lieutenant B—. He was about halfway down the line and riding close to the fence, evidently looking for me. When he came up, leading my horse, his face was black with more than dirt. He reminded me of having told me positively not to jump from my horse, and asked if I realized that I might have been knocked down and killed by the crazy animals. Of course I had seen all that as soon as I reached safety, but I could not admit my mistake at that time without breaking down and making a scene. I was nervous and exhausted, and in no condition to be scolded by anyone, so I said: "If you were not an old bachelor you would have known better than to have told a woman not to do a thing—you would have known that, in all probability, that would be the very thing she would do first!" That mollified him a little, but we did not laugh—life had just been too serious for that.

We met F— at our gate, just starting out to look for us. He said that when the storm first came up he was frightened about me, but when the broad adobe house began to rock he came to the conclusion that I

was about as safe out on the prairie as I would be in a house, particularly as I was on a good horse, and with two splendid horsemen who would take the very best care of me. My plait of hair was one mass of dirt and was cut and torn, and is still in a deplorable condition, and my face looks as if I had just recovered from smallpox.

FORT LYON, COLORADO TERRITORY,  
January, 1872.

Our little party was a grand success, but I am still wondering how it came about that Mrs. B— and I gave it together, for, although we are all in the same company and next-door neighbors, we have seen very little of each other. She is very quiet, and seldom goes out, even for a walk. It was an easy matter to arrange things so the two houses could, in a way, be connected, as they are under the same long roof, and the porches divided by a railing only, that was removed for the one evening. The dancing was in our house, and the supper was served in the B—'s. And that supper was a marvel of culinary art, I assure you, even if it was a fraud in one or two things.

The chicken salad—and it was delicious—was made of tender veal, but the celery in it was the genuine article, for we sent to Kansas City for that and a few other things. The turkey galantine was perfect,



"It is great fun to chase the big jack rabbits."

and the product of a resourceful brain from the North, and was composed almost entirely of wild goose! There was no April fool about the delicate Maryland biscuits, however, and other nice things that were set forth. We fixed up cozily the back part of our hall with comfortable chairs and cushions, and there punch was served during the evening. Major B—— and F—— made the punch. The orchestra might have been better, but the two violins and the accordion gave us music that was inspiring, and gave us noise, too.

Everyone in the garrison came—even the chaplain was here during the supper. The officers were in full-dress uniform, and the only man in plain evening dress was Mr. D——, the Post Trader, and in comparison to the gay uniforms of the officers he did look so sleek, from his shiny black hair down to the toes of his shiny black pumps!

There have been a great many antelope near the Post of late, and we have been on ever so many hunts for them. The greyhounds have not been with us, however, for following the hounds when chasing those swift animals not only requires the fastest kind of a horse and very good riding, but is exceedingly dangerous to both horse and rider because of the many prairie-dog holes that are terrible death traps. And besides, the dogs invariably get their feet full of cactus needles, which causes much suffering for days.

Chasing wolves and rabbits is not as dangerous, for they cannot begin to run as fast as antelope. And it is great fun to chase the big jack rabbits. They know their own speed perfectly and have great confidence in it. When the hounds start one he will give one or two jumps high up in the air to take a look at things, and then he commences to run with great bounds, with the enormously long ears straight up like sails on a boat, and almost challenges the dogs to follow. But the poor hunted thing soon finds out that he must do better than that if he wishes to keep ahead, so down go the ears, flat along his back, and stretching himself out very straight, goes his very fastest, and then the real chase is on.

But Mr. Jack Rabbit is cunning, and when he sees that the long-legged dogs are steadily gaining upon him and getting closer with every jump, he will invariably make a quick turn and run back on his own tracks, often going right underneath the fast-running dogs that cannot stop themselves, and can only give vicious snaps as they jump over him. Their stride—often fifteen and twenty feet—covers so much more ground than the rabbit's, it is impossible for them to make as quick turns, therefore it is generally the slow dog of the pack that catches the rabbit. And frequently a wise old rabbit will make many turns and finally reach a hole in safety.

The tail of a greyhound is his rudder and his brake, and the sight is most laughable when a whole pack of dogs are trying to stop, each tail whirling around like a Dutch windmill. Sometimes, in their frantic efforts to stop quickly, they will turn complete somersaults and roll over in a cloud of dust and dirt. But give up they never do, and once on their feet they start back after that rabbit with whines of disappointment and rage.

With all this outdoor exercise, one can readily perceive that the days are not long and tiresome. Of course there are a few who yawn and complain of the monotony of frontier life, but these are the stay-at-homes who sit by their own fires day after day and let cobwebs gather in brain and lungs. And these, too, are the ones who have time to discover so many faults in others, and become our garrison gossips! If they would take brisk rides on spirited horses in this wonderful air, and learn to shoot all sorts of guns in all sorts of positions, they would soon discover that a frontier post can furnish plenty of excitement. At least, I have found that it can.

F—— is with the company almost every morning, but after luncheon we usually go out for two or three hours, and always come back refreshed by the exercise. And the little house looks more cozy, and the snapping of the blazing logs sounds more cheerful because of our having been away from them.

*(To be continued)*

# THE PRINCE'S OWN

BY KATHARINE BRECK



LOOKED at her carefully. "Henrietta," I remarked, "you are uncommonly smart and very beautiful this evening. One might easily think that it was you who were trying to subjugate the prince instead of your sister."

"Of course we always thought that Daisy would marry an American," replied my wife. "She is so young and pretty."

"I never heard that Italians were averse to youth and beauty," I murmured.

"Mother sent her to Rome to us this winter to keep her out of society for another year, she was so young," said Henrietta, pathetically, "but even you, Geoffry, must admit that Domatello is the nicest Italian in the world."

"I so completely agree with you," I hastened to assure her, "that I am even now thanking my stars that you put a national limit to his charms!"

"We must get to the point," said Henrietta, with a delightful blush. "The prince will be here in a few minutes now and there is so much to decide before he comes. That is why I sent for you."

"I forgot that this was a business interview," I replied. When I had come home that afternoon I had found a formal note in Henrietta's handwriting requesting the pleasure of Mr. Geoffry Ford's company in the blue *salottino* one hour before dinner to discuss affairs of enormous importance with a lady. "You see," she had explained when, punctual to the minute, I had presented myself, "I don't feel as if I had exchanged an unhurried thought with you for days, Geoffry. You are always off hunting antiques with the Mediatore or playing golf, or Daisy and I are sightseeing,

and there are so many charming people here now, all with letters of introduction to us, and the balls and dinners—, and I do want Daisy to meet some of the people, and when every one has gone at night I'm so sleepy that I can't discuss important things with you, and when I try to talk to you at other peoples' parties the hostess always looks as if now that we were married we could have nothing of interest in common—" she looked thoroughly distressed.

"We will look up a desert island at once," I laughed. "What kind of a day have you had to-day?"

"It would take fully a week's solitude *à deux* to tell you all I am dying to confide," she replied. "I really don't know where to begin, but we must leave them all and talk seriously about Daisy and the prince. Oh, Geoffry!" she interrupted herself to say, "I bought that silver dessert service to-day from the Mediatore. It's too sweet, and he actually came down to your offer. And I have a perfectly new dress on, and you have not even mentioned it. Don't you like it?" Which question called forth the response at the top of the page.

"We must get to the point," Henrietta repeated, as if I had been the one to interrupt!

"Don't you think," I suggested mildly, "that when you asked him here to dinner so very informally, you advanced the question beyond the discussing point? Before we decide what we will do, let us find out just what has already been done and where we all stand."

"Ever since she first met him at Nemi on that absurd terrace of the *café* overlooking that heavenly lake and I was asleep and you had gone to see Don Filippo and that awful man from Nevada tried to talk

to her and Domatello saw that she was annoyed and pretended that he was her brother——"

"An Italian nobleman rescuing an American girl from the rude and unwelcome attentions of one of her own countrymen is an incident so strange to fiction that it might well rivet her attention."

"And then when we came," Henrietta resumed, "and found that not only his mother was English, but that she was first cousin to Aunt Susan's husband and that Domatello had spent two summers when he was at the University right next door to Aunt Susan and that he knew her so well——"

"It was like a letter of introduction from the old lady herself!"

"Every time that Daisy has met him Romance has graced the occasion," Henrietta went on dismally. "The day that I insisted on taking her through the catacombs, didn't he appear as if by magic and rescue us from a dime novel catastrophe which threatened? The kind of thing that everyone who lives here assures you never happens any more. And if that was not ridiculous enough, when she dropped her handkerchief from the dome of St. Peter's didn't it flutter down into his very hand, as if he had been waiting for it and she knew it, instead of looking like an ant if we saw him at all and he didn't know that we were there, and then that rainy day she went to the Rag Fair——"

"You always see everyone that you know at the Rag Fair on rainy days," I protested. "It wasn't queer her meeting him there. They all think that you are more apt to get bargains in the rain——"

"That may be true," said Henrietta, "but they never take their best things out in the rain, so that there is that to be thought of, too. But we are wandering from the point, Geoffry, and we must put things clearly so as to know where we are. Their whole acquaintance has been a series of romantic coincidences."

"All the men who know him speak well of him," I said, "and he's rich enough not to be a fortune hunter. Their place is one of the few really old Villas here, well kept up by the same family for whom it was originally built. But," I went on seriously, "of course all this is for your father and Daisy to decide later. What I want to

know, Henrietta, is just where we are now. How friendly a stand have his charms beguiled you into taking? How am I to greet him to-night, for instance? As a friend and prospective brother-in-law or a robber who——"

"Oh, dear! I wish that I knew!" cried Henrietta. "When he proposed for her and you told him that she was very young and that he must say nothing to her until he had talked to her father, I thought that we'd have a two months' respite until father came over for her in April, and that before then we might find out something definite against him—— Not that I want to find out anything against him," she added, seeing my amazed look, "but I have the old-fashioned American idea that there must be something wrong with all foreigners. And there often is, especially with the ones that marry American girls."

"Your father will especially hate her marrying an Italian," I made answer, "and his title will be like waving a red flag in the face of the American eagle."

"We must not forget his mother and Aunt Susan!" cried Henrietta hopefully. "She married an Englishman and has lived happily ever after and she is father's own sister, and Domatello's mother is English and lived next door to Aunt Susan's husband until she was married."

"All this may be unnecessary worrying," I said. "It may be that Daisy does not care for him at all. Do you know how she feels?"

"I don't want to talk about him too much to her," replied Henrietta, "or try to draw her out at all. If we do find that he's an impostor and a villain she will get over it much more quickly if she thinks that no one knows."

"In other words, you think that she is very much in love."

"I do not know how much she realizes it," said Henrietta, "but it shines in her radiant face and dances in her blue eyes. Really, Geoffry, she is so sweet, such a darling, I don't see how he can help being in love with her!"

"She comes from an exceptionally good family for wives," I admitted, "but, Henrietta, if you wanted a two months' respite, why did you ask him here to dinner to-night with no one else but the Greys?"

"It happened," replied Henrietta, vague-



ly. "Really, Geoffry," she went on, gathering herself together, "I can't tell you just how it came about and I do feel a bit guilty about it, but six balances the table better and I knew that they liked him and it did not occur to me how seriously the Italian side of him might take an informal invitation like this. Of course he was glad to come, but I don't think it would be fair to try to put the blame on him and say that he beguiled me into asking him."

"You don't know beguilement when you see it—in others," I laughed, "but now that it is done we must make the best and the lightest of it possible."

"John and Julia are such dears and they will help make it seem natural," she said, glad that I was sharing the responsibility, "and I'm going to use the new dessert set. I told you, did I not, that I had bought it from the Mediatore to-day?"

"How did you ever get him down to the price?" I asked admiringly. "You are really a wonder. It's worth more than that, and I never thought he'd come down. Let's have another look at it."

"It's too late now. Baldasseroni's been cleaning it to get it ready and I didn't mean to tell you. I had planned not to say a word but just let it burst upon you in all its clean splendor at dessert, but I forgot and told!"

"To get back to Daisy and the prince," I insinuated.

"I think," said Henrietta, "that the reason I am so suspicious about Italians tonight is the story the Mediatore told me about the former owner of this service. The man who sold it to him won it last fall from the owner, the man in whose family it had been for years, centuries perhaps."

"In dealing with the Mediatore you must never lose sight of the deplorable fact that he is a very lively liar," I said. "Remember that faked picture he offered you. It was at most two years old and yet he was ready to take oath that it had been in the family of a Roman prince of his acquaintance for seventy years."

"I know," said Henrietta, "but I think he must have been very hard pressed for money just then, Geoffry, for I think that he is really truthful by nature."

"Seeing that it was your confiding disposition which led you to listen to my en-

treaties it would be ungrateful to reproach you with that very trustfulness now," I exclaimed. "What more did the Mediatore tell you about the silver?"

"He said that it would be betraying a confidence to tell me to whom it had belonged," replied Henrietta, glancing at me to see if I appreciated his reserve, "but that it had been made for that family I forget just how many centuries ago and that it had their crest on, so that while delicacy prevented his mentioning the name we could look it up easily if we wished. Don't you know it's all queer beasts and curls and geometrical figures? He said that it was part of a marriage service. That they used to have twenty or thirty courses at the wedding feast and all carried in on silver plates. Chickens cooked with sugar and rose water and all kinds of disgusting things. For all these years it has been in the same family, one of their most valued possessions, and all kinds of famous people have eaten off it, Beatrice d'Este and Leonardo and the Sforza and——"

"How old did he say it was?" I inquired blandly, "and where did these owners live? and did the blameless but imaginative Mediatore say that all these people ate off these plates?"

"He said who knows but they did!"

"Not I!" I laughed. "What is there about all this, my dear, that you found so depressing? Are you afraid that you will have to eat chicken and rose water if Daisy marries into an Italian family?"

"You're too ridiculous!" cried Henrietta. "As if I'd let a little thing like that interfere with Daisy's happiness. I've not come to the awful part yet. I mean about the present head of the house, the one that lost it at cards. He's too awful to think about, so weak and depraved, a type of the very worst side of modern Italy. Physically and mentally and morally skimped. He's awfully poor and has repeatedly tried to marry money, but so far in vain, thank goodness! Now, Geoffry, just suppose that Domatello——"

"Talk about being ridiculous," I interrupted, "who is being so now? Think of that strapping big Domatello with his fine color and his quick mind——"

"I know!" Henrietta apologized. "Oh, there's some one coming! It can't be eight o'clock!"

"It's Daisy," I said. "Come in, D. dear. How sweet you look!"

"I'm glad you wore that blue dress," said Henrietta. "Did Peters wave your hair? It's just right. Marcel was a great man!"

My pretty sister-in-law came into the room and sat down in a big gold chair covered with velvet a few shades darker than her frock. The fire and the soft light from the candles played on her pretty hair and her soft cheeks. She looked very young and very much to be protected, I thought, but I only said: "Have you had a good day?"

"Very," she smiled. "I am beginning to feel as much at home here as in New York."

Henrietta and I refrained from looking at each other.

"There is always," the girl went on, "a deliciously strange feeling here, a feeling of unreality and romance. It's so hard to make myself realize that I am at last and actually seeing original work; that Michelangelo's hands really touched these marbles, that Raphael's brush colored these very walls, that some of the statues and fragments were carved by the Greeks at their best, their golden period! It's too wonderful! I feel as I couldn't be I! And yet some days I feel as if I had a part of my own in all the romance and unreality!"

"The part that a spring daffodil has that grows on one of the old ruins here!" said Henrietta, beginning warmly and ending somewhat lamely as she caught my appreciative eye.

Then the Greys came in and half a minute afterwards Prince Domatello. He and John Grey were both fine-looking men, tall and well built. As they shook hands John looked the more Latin of the two. Domatello's fresh color and big frame were surely more Anglo-Saxon than John's slight elegance. I used to wonder if it was his Italian appearance or his American mind that attracted Julia. Perhaps it was the combination. She was born in Rome and had been brought up in Italy, and though she called herself an American she had absorbed so much Italian atmosphere that though she may have been American to the Italians, to the Americans she was quite Italian.

"I had a most amusing experience this afternoon," she began, after we were comfortably seated at the table, "one of those

coincidences you'd call impossible if it did not happen to yourself."

"Or if it were not recounted to you by some perfectly trustworthy person like Julia Grey," laughed her husband.

"Our *villino*," she explained to Daisy, "is quite in the country and the widening of the street on which it stands has brought the house so much forward that the little loggia from my room overlooks the highway. I was sitting there one noon a few days ago when my attention was diverted from the distant mountains to something more directly under my eye. A man, a woman and a dancing bear had stopped and the man was asking if the *signora bella* would like to see Beppo dance. Lunch was not served and I was glad of an excuse for not going in to answer a lot of cards which had come in the morning mail, so I signified my gracious willingness and Beppo went through the usual clumsy antics of every trained bear. My camera was on the chair by me and the sun was just right as they stood, and they made a tempting subject against the white road, so I snapped them, and then they went away, bowing for their *soldi*, and I thought no more about them until this afternoon when the films came back, developed. They were the pictures that Henrietta and I had taken in the Forum and I wanted especially to have them good. It was nearly dark when John brought them home and I took them out on the loggia to get a better light on them, and they're all bad, Henrietta! The only good one was of that wretched animal. Isn't it a shame?"

"It's annoying, not to say curious, how often you get the things you don't want in this world," I said.

"Do you not think that much depends on how much and in what manner you want them?" asked the prince seriously.

"There is more to my story," broke in Julia. "Let's talk of the psychology of coincidences afterwards, for the prince has a fascinating theory about it all, but I want to tell the queer part of my story first."

"While I stood there looking at the photographs, who should come by but the man, the woman and the bear! They had spent the intervening days in entertaining the Romans and were on their wandering way to pastures new. They asked if I wanted to see the bear dance, but I was not in the

mood and shook my head and they were just going on when I bethought me of the picture I had taken of them, and I dropped it down. The man thought it was money at first and when he saw that it was not, he motioned to the woman to pick it up.

"But if you could have seen them when they looked at it! It was perfectly delicious! If a life-sized portrait of yourself by Sargent had dropped into your lap in the tram you couldn't be more surprised or dumfounded than those poor souls were with that photograph. They nearly looked their eyes out of their heads. They gave each other awful nudges in the ribs with their elbows as they pointed out each exquisite detail. When at last they thought of me they cuffed the bear sharply as an indication of their own shortcoming in social amenities. They courtesied themselves and they made the bear courtesy. They walked up the street, into the twilight hills, leaning on each other, intoxicated with joy, and punctuating their delight with more awful nudges. The bear, quite forgotten, shambled heavily on behind."

"A thing like that could not happen once in a million times," said Henrietta, looking at the prince, as we all murmured our appreciation of the dramatic finale. "I don't know your theory, prince——"

"No," said the prince. "This is quite outside of my theory. It is one of the rarest things in the world, pure coincidence. Unadulterated coincidence, as you would say in America." He went on, seeing that we were all interested. "I don't remember ever hearing of so remarkable a case!"

"But, prince!" began Henrietta, and stopped suddenly. It was impossible to confront him with the instances she had in mind of his extraordinary meetings with Daisy.

"There is almost inevitably another element that enters in," he said. "For the first time, perhaps in months, you think of a certain friend and the next day you have a letter from him. That may be thought transference. You are unable to remember a name, then just as you are about to speak it some one else says it also. Another instance of mind reading. You start to walk down the Corso and some sudden impulse makes you turn into the via Condotti, and there you meet a friend whom you particularly wanted to see, but that may be due

to your will and because you particularly wanted to see this friend—that some subconscious sense inclined you to turn a corner which a moment before you had every idea of passing."

Daisy was listening with every appearance of simple interest, but Henrietta's cheeks were scarlet.

"That is why your story seems to me not only charming but remarkable," Domatello went on, turning to Julia, "because none of these elements enter into it. It was pure coincidence."

"Do you really think that wanting a thing helps you to get it?" asked Julia. "I don't mean because you try in the ordinary way, but that the desire of your will can bend circumstances or people to meet your wishes?"

"I don't know that I ever formulated a creed about it," he replied, "I only know that when I want a thing very much I work for it internally as well as externally, if I may put it so clumsily. I am like the small boy who wished his mother to hunt for his lost knife while he prayed that she might find it! I believe in bending every energy to the accomplishment of any object which is worthy of so much thought."

"Did you ever try to find anything that you had lost that way?" asked Henrietta, trying to open a more impersonal avenue of conversation.

"I never lost but one thing that I cared enormously about," he said, "and I suppose that the person who got it cared about it even more than I did, for in spite of strenuous efforts I have not been able to get hold of it again."

"Is there a story about it that we can hear?" Daisy asked.

"Do tell it!" cried Julia. "I've been chattering ever since we sat down and I am half starved!"

"It's rather a personal story," began the prince, "but I can skip most of the family history and all of the dates and it's a droll old tale in itself."

"My mother came of a Genoese family and it was to one of her ancestors that this story happened, once upon a time. He was called Don Ludivico, although he afterwards succeeded to the title. He had for a neighbor a very powerful duke whose only daughter, the beautiful Grasiola, fell madly in love with Don Ludivico, whose family

was not the equal of hers in wealth or in rank. Moreover, beautiful and charming as she was, Don Ludivico was more embarrassed than pleased with her affection, as he loved her not at all, but rather a certain Donna Maria di Pacienti, who became subsequently, and I quite forget in exactly what degree, my grandmother.

"The duke had chosen quite another *sposo* for his daughter, a gentleman from his point of view much more desirable, and indeed so delightful a man in himself that had her father not selected him as her husband in all probability Grasiola would have fallen in love with him herself. The duke sent for Don Ludivico and threatened him with all kinds of horrible vengeance if he did not immediately stop making love to his daughter. Ludivico was clever enough not to deny making love to Grasiola, knowing that while her father might be angry with him if he had, yet he would probably be much more angry did he think that Grasiola's advances to him had not been favorably met.

"He put his own interpretation on Don Ludivico's silence and went on to say what he wished, or rather commanded, my grandfather to do. There was to be some kind of a tournament in the course of a few days, jousting, archery, high jumping, croquet, or whatever form of sport was synchronous to the time, and the duke proposed that Don Ludivico should allow Prince Errico to win from him, Don Ludivico being such a good player and Donna Grasiola so sure of his skill that she was willing to promise her hand to the victor——"

"Was he not afraid that his own lady might also prefer to wed a conquering hero?" asked Julia.

"Exactly the point that occurred to Don Ludivico," replied the prince with an appreciative glance at Julia, "but the difficulty and its solution seem to have presented themselves almost simultaneously to his mind and, according to his chronicler, a priestly cousin, he replied to the duke that while he was willing to obey him in all things, the disappointment of not being his son-in-law was crushing. 'Name any other lady in the realm and she is yours!' cried the duke in the good old-fashioned robber-baron way. 'Surely there are others who might make you happy.'

"Don Ludivico admitted cautiously that

the estates of Donna Maria di Pacienti adjoined his and that if he was really not to be allowed to follow the dictates of his heart—and so on. You see what an old hypocrite he was! He then went on to say that he feared that Donna Maria was interested in Errico and that should he win the contest—The duke interrupted him to assure him that Donna Maria should be delicately taken into the secret, in such a way as to do his cause much good.

"Everything seems to have happened exactly as it was planned. Grasiola married the prince and lived happily with him ever afterwards as far as anyone knows. Don Ludivico not only married the lady of his choice, a precedent we have all striven to follow, but he succeeded in so inspiring the duke with a sense of obligation that he sent them some beautiful silver for a wedding present. This silver, a dessert service, has come down from mother to son ever since. This silver I succeeded by my incredible folly in losing, and I have not yet recovered it."

Henrietta was shading her face with a pink fan that partly disguised her paleness, but I knew from the lines about her mouth that she was suffering. Uncertainty was the one thing she could not bear. "What kind of a service was it?" she asked bravely, trying to make her question sound as natural as the comments of the others.

Domatello described it all too accurately, the large round platters, the fruit dishes, and eighteen plates, with the crest worked into the design of each plate.

Henrietta looked at me and at the pantry door. Should she countermand the order for the dessert service? I shook my head, trying hard to think quickly and clearly. I was very much disturbed. A degenerate young gambler, the Mediatore had said. John and Julia were old friends, tried and to be trusted. Why not show him up before them? I believed that I could do it in a way that would make it less hard for Daisy than to make more of a circumstance of it when we were alone. Baldasseroni was carving the birds and I was mixing the salad dressing. With the appalling knowledge that salad alone stood between us and the appearance of the dessert set, no epicure ever measured his oil or counted his grains of salt more carefully than did I.

Henrietta sent me appealing glances. Of

course, she seemed to admit, his marrying Daisy was quite out of the question, but did the laws of hospitality not demand that we should not expose him at our own table? Did they or did they not, I wondered. Had he not forfeited all right to consideration? I must think of poor, pretty Daisy and of what would be easiest for her.

"I always have the feeling," continued the prince, as the oil dropped slowly into the salad, "that I shall find that silver. For so many years it has been in our family, always a wedding present to a bride, given afterwards by her to her son for a gift to his bride, as my mother gave it to me. I know now that it was a trust and not a possession which I had a right to part with, but I was young——"

"I, too, have a feeling that you will find it and in some unexpected way." My voice sounded hollow in spite of my efforts to keep it natural.

"What a quantity of oil you are putting into that salad, Geoffry!" said Daisy. "How did you lose the silver, prince? Was it stolen?"

"I should have blamed myself less if it had been!" he replied.

"He's brazen!" I telegraphed to Henrietta, but her face was too pitiful and I nodded. I saw Baldasseroni's bewildered look as she spoke quickly to him. An Italian servant, no matter how well trained, never attains to the unquestioning obedience of an English one, and I was afraid he would remonstrate audibly, but Henrietta knows when to plead and when to command, and doing the one with her eyes and the other with her tongue she got him safely out of the room just as the much mixed salad began its course around the table.

"I adored my father," the prince was saying. I must have missed a few sentences in the excitement of watching Henrietta and the butler. "And I was only sixteen and it all seemed so awful to me. He had just recovered from the typhoid fever and one day when I was in the room the doctor told him that he must go to Switzerland for a couple of months to recuperate.

"'Things are too busy here,' replied my father. 'I can't afford to go to Switzerland now.'

"Foolish boy that I was, I immediately associated this remark of my father's with his having that morning consented to buy

for me a pair of horses I had asked for instead of connecting it with a very important crisis in Parliament, of which my father was a member.

"He couldn't afford to go to Switzerland! That was the only thing I heard, and that very day he had been so generous to me! I could hardly wait to bundle up my silver, the only valuable thing I personally owned, and I sold it to the first dealer I found. The money which I took to my father was hardly sufficient to take him to the Italian border, and though he was tremendously touched by my thought of him, his distress when he found how I had obtained the money was great. We tried at once to get the silver back but it seemed to have disappeared off the face of the earth. My father always thought that the dealer must have thought I had stolen it and that it had gone promptly into the melting pot, for he offered an enormous reward for its return. I have never felt that it was gone. I have searched the shops of Italy and it is not here, but some day I shall find it. Who knows, signorina, perhaps in the house of some of your rich compatriots!" He looked smilingly at Daisy.

"It's a shame the way Americans rob Italy!" she responded warmly. "I never thought of it so much there at home, but here where the things belong it seems almost inhuman to transplant them!"

"You're mixing your animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms most awfully in your metaphor," teased John.

"I have in my pocket," said the prince, "the advertisement which my father had printed at the time of the loss. It has a full description of the silver. I always carry it with me as a kind of identification in case I ever run across it. Would you like to see it?" He was sitting by Henrietta and handed it naturally enough to her. She read it carefully, her face assuming the emancipated expression of one freed from a particularly noisome dungeon. She passed the paper to John and met my contented glance with one as contented. I knew her generous nature and knew that having wronged Domatello in her mind she was now planning a royal recompense. She gave more hurried directions to the bewildered Baldasseroni. Would she be able to keep Daisy out of it? How far would her



feeling of reparation carry her? Did I or did I not know Henrietta?

"Stranger things than your finding it in an American house have happened," she chattered, bound to keep the hero of the occasion from noticing until the psychological moment the silver plate that had been placed before him, "call it coincidence, or thought transference or strength of will and desire, or— Will you have an ice, Domatello?"

It was the first time she had dropped his title in addressing him and he flushed slightly with pleasure. He turned his head. For a moment he was fairly stunned by what he saw, then he fairly bubbled over with excitement.

"Do you mean," asked Julia as soon as she could make herself heard, "that this is your long-lost silver? The service which you have been telling us about, and that you did not know that Henrietta had it and that she did not know that it was yours? It is far more wonderful than my bear story. This must be a haunted house!"

Domatello's English mother and his Anglo-Saxon training were submerged for the moment by his Latin temperament.

"It is mine," he replied ardently, with his glowing eyes on Daisy, "until I am permitted to offer it to my bride!"

Daisy's soft glance met his and a lovely pink suffused her cheeks, her throat and her pretty shoulders. They had quite forgotten us. As interested observers it was quite evi-

dent to us that in those glances the silver had been offered to his bride—and accepted!

"Why didn't you tell us?" cried Julia as she looked from him to Daisy and then reproachfully at Henrietta.

"Here's to the bride!" John rose, glass in hand.

"Until her father comes—" I began resolutely, looking to Henrietta to support me, but Henrietta had eyes, as I might have known she would have, only for Daisy and Domatello, and the glance with which she regarded them was a benediction. I lifted my glass with the others.

"Henrietta bought it of a lying mediatore," I said an hour later when Domatello had sufficiently recovered himself to remember the silver again and to ask about it. "A man who when he finds out about the reward offered will probably die of pure chagrin."

"He told me the most ridiculous tale about the owner of the service," said Henrietta hotly. "A mediatore, indeed! He's a worthless wretch!"

"Not quite worthless!" Domatello laughed with satisfaction. "Not that I will admit that I owe my two treasures to him entirely, but, after all, what is a mediatore but an instrument for bringing together people and things which might otherwise not meet so soon? He has been a useful instrument, a successful mediatore!"

## AN OLD VIOLIN

By HELEN A. SAXON

IN far Cremona centuries ago  
This little sighing, singing thing was wrought,  
Of dreams 'tis fashioned and its tones are fraught  
With sweetness only centuries bestow;  
But give an artist hand the slender bow,  
And hark the tumult of impassioned thought—  
The Heaven we missed, the earth we vainly sought  
Within our shaken pulses ebb and flow.

Innumerable voices through it rain  
The music of an unremembered past,  
Dim echoes of illusive joy and pain,  
In requiem sob or ringing trumpet blast,  
Are merged to one incomparable strain  
That holds the heart of every listener fast.

# AS TOLD TO THE CHILDREN

BY OWEN OLIVER



MOST fairy stories are not true, but this one is. I knew the fairy. What was she like? Why, very like Aunt Elsie, only smaller of course; as if you looked at Auntie through the wrong end of the opera glasses. I'll tell you about her presently, but first I must tell you about the enchanter. It is his story really.

He was tall and dark and he had a gruff voice and a big nose and a black beard—like mine—and he was “not so young as he used to be,” and rather grumpy and very fidgety, and he lived in an enchanted castle most of his time; a castle in the air. He kept it tied up to a chimney stack, and climbed into it out of his study window when he wanted to make enchantments.

There are lots of ways of enchanting people. He tried to do it by writing spells on paper. Some of them were very long spells, and when they were printed they filled books, but they didn't enchant people very much. That was what made him grumpy. And he shut himself up in his air castle more and more to try if he could make his spells stronger. He stayed up in the air so much that the wind blew some of his hair off, and he had a little bald patch at the back of his head, like the one Auntie teases me about, and he began to feel tired and solemn and old, like I did before Auntie married me and found a spell to make me grow younger.

He was a very terrible enchanter, but there was one good thing about him. He was ever so fond of some little people who lived in his house. They hadn't any father and mother and he was their uncle, and he wasn't grumpy to *them*. So they weren't afraid of him, and sometimes they even

went up in his study—but little people shouldn't do that, you know—and made him come down out of his air castle to play with them.

They did not understand that he went up there to fight his enemies, the ogres. They were very big and fierce ogres, and there were two kinds of them: the Editor Ogres and the Publisher Ogres. They had big clubs and seven-leagued boots and enormous trumpets that they were always blowing, and a great engine that they squeezed people in. It was called the Press, and it was very powerful, and made a terrible noise when it let off steam. He couldn't enchant the ogres with his spells, because they were too cunning—you've no idea how cunning they are!—but they bought some of them to try if they would enchant other people. He was glad for them to buy his spells, only they wouldn't give him enough pennies for them: and that was what the fights were about, and sometimes they said nasty things to him. Some said that they couldn't give him any more for the spells, because they didn't enchant people enough. Others were even ruder and said there was no enchantment at all in them, and sent them back to him. Two or three ran off to America with them, and never paid him at all. So he found it hard to get enough pennies to keep the little people and buy them toys and take them for holidays; and you couldn't wonder if he got a little worried and grumpy.

One day he was sailing about in his air castle—it was like an air ship, and there was no telling where it would go when it started—and he saw another castle on the ground, and went down and tied his own castle to a tree, and walked up to the front door of the other castle and knocked and asked who lived there. They told him that

it belonged to the witch Scriba. That made his knees tremble, because she was a very great witch, and could make spells that enchanted even the ogres. She only laughed at their press, for she had a press of her own that squeezed *them*; and she could blow off steam louder than they could. However, he asked if he could see her, and they told him to go in. He found her sitting on a golden throne, writing at a silver table with thick red ink that looked like blood. She used a great quill pen, nearly as big as a spear, that spluttered ink all over the table, and ogres were waiting outside with bags of gold to buy her spells as soon as they were written.

She was so busy writing that she did not notice the enchanter at first; but at last she looked up, and he saw that she was very pale, and rather old and had fierce black eyes that seemed to stare through him, when she laid down her pen and looked up. She looked rather cross at being disturbed, but she had quite a pleasant voice when she spoke.

"What do you want, my good young man?" she asked.

"I am not good," he told her—he was rather a truthful enchanter—"and I am not young, and I am not a man. I am an enchanter!"

He swelled himself out when he said that, because he was proud of it.

"You don't know what you are talking about," she answered as if she didn't want to be bothered with nonsense. "You are better than you think, and younger than you feel, and quite a nice man; but you're no enchanter. Did you ever make a spell like that?"

She handed him over one that she had just written, and he read it, and put it down, and shook his head.

"Never," he owned; and that was the truth. For her spells were very wonderful.

"Or like this?" she asked, and handed him another.

"No," he said. "I never did; and I never shall."

"Umph!" she said. "I don't know about that; but you won't unless you alter. You must be enchanted yourself before you can enchant others."

"Is there a spell to do it?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "There is a spell."

"What is it called?" he asked.

She looked at him with her great black eyes; and he saw that when she was young she must have been very beautiful.

"It is called Trouble," she told him.

"Why!" he cried. "I've had plenty of that. The ogres——"

"Nonsense!" she interrupted. "You don't know what trouble is; real trouble. You never had a child of your own to lose. You haven't even lost one of your brother's children. If you want to write good spells you must lose a few of those little people; two or three would be sufficient."

He was very angry at that, and was half a mind to throw her ivory inkpot at her; but he was a polite man—which rather spoiled him as an enchanter—so he didn't.

"I'd rather write bad spells and keep the little people," he said. "I wouldn't hurt them for anything."

"You needn't hurt them," she said. "You can sell me a couple. I'll be good to them; but you must give them up to me and never come near them."

And then he really would have thrown something at her if she had only been a witch and not a lady; but he knew that it was not good manners to sling ink at ladies. So he bit his lip till he left off being angry.

"I will do without that spell," he said. "Isn't there any other?"

"There may be," she said; "but it is the only one that I have ever found."

"Losing your little people?" he asked.

"That was the way the spell came to me," she answered: "but of course there are other ways of making trouble. You might try getting married. That *generally* makes trouble enough; but sometimes it doesn't act."

I used to think it *always* did; but I know better since I've married Aunt Elsie. Still you can't go by her. She's like a fairy—when you look at her through the wrong end of the opera glasses! Not when she's making faces at me, of course!

"I dare say it would make trouble," he said, "but I don't know if it would make enough; and I don't know anyone to marry, and I couldn't afford it."

"Umph!" Scriba said. "I can afford it; and I want those little people, and if you won't sell them—you'd better marry me. There will be trouble enough *then*!"

He thought that there would be; but he

didn't mind trouble, if it would make his spells better. So he was going to telephone for a parson to marry them there and then. But he was very much afraid that the little people wouldn't like a witch for an auntie. So he thanked her and said that he would think about it, and climbed up in his airship castle and sailed away again; and Scriba went on writing and forgot all about him; but she thought of his little people, and some little people that she had lost once upon a time—such little baby people. And so she wrote a wonderful, wonderful spell that enchanted little people all over the earth, and will go on enchanting them as long as there is any earth or any little people.

When he had arrived home and anchored his air castle to the chimney stack, he was going to stay up there and write; but the little people ran up to the study and tugged at the ropes—they were called heartstrings—and shouted to him; and they shouted a magic spell that made him come sliding down the rope, as quick as anything. This was the spell:

Nursie says it's time for bed.  
Come and play with us instead.  
Uncle, uncle! Please do come!  
Fee-fi-fo! Fee-fi-fo-fum!

The "fee-fi-fo-fum" part is very important. You try it on Aunt Elsie, the next time you want to stay up late. She's quite easy to enchant; but if more than two of you sit on her lap at once you'll smash her, and there won't be any Aunt Elsie left.

When the enchanter got down the rope, he found that these little people had played a naughty, wicked, abominable trick upon him. It wasn't bedtime at all, only tea-time! And they wanted him to come to tea in the nursery, because the fairy was going to have tea with them. They didn't know she was a fairy, and the strange thing was that she didn't know it herself, but the enchanter suspected it from the very first, though they told him that she was Miss Musa, their music mistress, and she had been to give them their music lessons, and they had asked her to stay to tea; and she said that she thought the enchanter was busy making enchantments, or she wouldn't have dared to stay. But I believe she knew that they were going to fetch him down,

and was curious to see what an enchanter was like. Fairies are very curious and want to know all about everything.

There's another thing about them. They're very artful. She was; and she artfully told the enchanter that she had found his spells very charming. That put him in a good temper directly, and he was quite nice, and played games to amuse the little people; and the fairy played and sang funny little songs that pleased them; and at last she sang a song to please him. He was sure then that she was a fairy, for she made her enchantments in music, and couldn't help making them without having to try.

He liked fairies of course. So he walked home with her, and they talked a great deal; and the next time she came he went down and begged her to stop to tea, "to please the little people"; and he read spells out of one of his books, and she sang spells, and they were all enchanted. And the enchanter was enchanted so much that, when he took the fairy home he told her about his spells and the ogres and the witch Scriba, but he did not say that the witch wanted to marry him to get the little people, only what she had told him about the great spell of trouble, and that he would not mind trouble, if it would make his enchantments better, so that he could soon earn more pennies to make the little people happier; and then the fairy looked up at him, with a smile that was very fairylike.

"There is a better spell than money for that," she said; "and I think it is a better spell than trouble, and makes stronger enchantments."

"What is that?" he asked.

"Love," she told him.

Then he was absolutely and positively certain and sure that she was a fairy in disguise; and he told her so.

"You are a singing fairy," he declared; "and I am sure that you have wings, and if you tried you could fly"; and she turned rather pale.

"Don't!" she said. "Don't. Please, Mr.—Mr. Enchanter. I am always wanting to try; but mother is old, and old-fashioned. She couldn't bear me to be a singing fairy and fly about singing. She is so prejudiced against the stage."

The stage is a sort of flower that fairies perch upon when they sing, you know.

"You would earn a lot of money," he

said, "with a voice like yours, and you could do so much for her."

But the fairy only laughed at him.

"My mother doesn't want money," she said. "She wants *me*!"

The enchanter was a good mind to tell her that he did too; but he felt sure that such a young and lovely and beautiful fairy would not dream of marrying an enchanter, who wasn't good at enchanting, and who had grown rather old and a little grumpy and very fidgety. So he only told her that she was a very fairylike fairy, and he hoped that sometimes she would sing to him, because it would make his spells better.

She sang to him often, and her singing did seem to make his spells better; but he had a lot of misfortune just then. It was one of the times when an ogre ran off to America with several of his best spells and did not pay for them; and some wizards called usurers turned a lot of his money into dust. So he really did not know how to find pennies to buy nice things for his little people; and then he thought of what the witch Scriba had said to him; and he made up his mind that he must marry her, because she had such a lot of money. He told the little people about it, and they begged him to wait till the day after tomorrow. He said that he would; but it was no use, because he must do it. Then he went up to his castle in the air; and the little people stopped downstairs and cried; and when they couldn't stop crying they wanted to be comforted. So they went to the fairy to see if she could comfort them.

She gave them ice creams and chocolates and a lot of kisses, and called them "poor little angels." She made an awful mistake there! That comforted them and made them feel ever so much better; but when they had gone she cried and cried and couldn't comfort herself a tiny bit, because the enchanter had enchanted her, though he didn't know it—and he can't make out how it happened right to this very day—and the enchantment had made her want him to marry *her*; and she knew that was just what he wanted himself, though he wouldn't say so, because he was poor, and thought that she was ever so much too nice to like a silly old fellow like him. If Aunt Elsie interrupts any more you must smother her with the sofa cushions.

So she shut up her mouth very tightly—the fairy I mean—and made up her mind to make a mighty enchantment for him; and she went and sat at the piano and played on it for a long time; and then an enchantment came into her head; and she played something that made the room feel dark, and trees and ferns grow out of the carpet, and little twinkling stars glow out of the ceiling, and the fire sound as if water was running down a hill; and then she sang as if she was a fairy enchantress dressed in white, and sitting on a tree that had fallen down, and funny little goblins went running in and out of the ferns and staring at her. . . . Yes, I mean that she made up a song like Aunt Elsie does; but you mustn't interrupt any more, because this is a very important part of the story.

The enchantment that she made was a very funny one. There was no "fee-fi-fo-fum" in it; but you won't understand it any better than if there was, because it was in fairy language. No, not French; only poetry. It was this:

#### ENCHANTMENT

To-night I'll cast a spell on you  
Who think yourself so wise.  
Just hold my hand. . . . And this one too.  
Look bravely in my eyes.

Forget the world you love too well,  
Forget your dreams of fame,  
Forget your gain or loss to tell,  
Forget your very name.

Forget all things that were and are,  
All things you hope shall be,  
Till naught is left but one twin star—  
My eyes—and you and me.

Now there is only you and I,  
And you and I are one,  
And we'll go sailing through the sky,  
Beyond the farthest sun;  
And you shall love me till you die—  
Dear heart! The spell is done!

What does it all mean? Oh, it's no use asking *me*. I'm not a fairy. Perhaps Aunt Elsie can tell you. She is much more like a fairy—if you look at her with the opera glasses the long way round. . . .







*Drawn by John Cassel.*

*"And she sang it right to the end."*

Yes, I think Aunt Elsie is right. It meant that she loved the enchanter and his little people, and always had, and always did, and always would.

Anyhow she made the spell; and when it was finished she wrote it on music paper, and put on her hat and coat—she did not dress like a fairy, you will remember, because her mother did not care for wings—and she went and took it to an ogre's; an ogre who dealt in spells that were sung to music.

"I have brought you a wonderful spell," she said; and the ogre shook his head and looked at her over his spectacles. He was rather a nice ogre, and he was old and had long white hair, exactly like Mr. Sangster, who comes to see Aunt Elsie sometimes.

"My dear young lady," he said, "people bring me hundreds! But there is no enchantment in them." He did not know that she was a fairy, of course.

"There is in this," she said. "Let me sing it to you."

He made rather a grimace at that; but he liked her because she was a beautiful fairy and young. So he said:

"Very well, my dear; but I am afraid I shall disappoint you."

So she sat down at his piano and played and sang it; and he was enchanted, and nodded his head—like Mr. Sangster does when Aunt Elsie is singing—and said, "Wonderful, wonderful!" And he said that there ought to be a fortune in it; and he would pay her so much for every person who was enchanted by it; and he told her that she was a singing fairy and ought to come out in grand opera and then she would make a fortune; but she told him that she couldn't do that because her mother wouldn't like it. Real true fairies think everything of their mothers and auntie-mothers. Never forget that.

Next she went to the enchanter's, and gave the little people two pennies each to go and buy sweets, so that she could talk to him quietly; and she said: "I have made a song spell and sold it and Mr. Sangster says that it will bring me a lot of money. Will you take it for the little people? Please do."

And the enchanter looked at her as if he didn't know what to say; and at last he said: "O child! You are a fairy. You are! I can't take your money—of course

I can't! But — but — God bless you, dear!"

"But you are going to take the witch Scriba's," the poor fairy said. She was almost crying.

"She is willing to marry me," he said; and the fairy gave a little scream; and she tried to say that she was too; but she couldn't because she felt shy.

"You think that money is a better spell than love?" she asked; and the enchanter walked up and down the hearth rug, like I used to when I was worried, before I married Aunt Elsie.

"My child," he said, "I think that love is the best spell in the world; but I have grown too old for it."

The fairy turned pale and nearly fell off her chair. She thought he meant that he didn't love her; and she had felt so sure that he did.

"Too old to love!" she said.

"No, no!" he told her. "Too old for anyone to love me—anyone young and dear like you."

"Oh!" she said. "Is *that* all!" And she was quite smiling again. "There's a spell to make you young again, and—Listen to mine!"

She went and sat down at the piano. Then she got up and took a book to make the stool higher—just like Aunt Elsie does. And the enchanter went and stood beside her, like I stand beside Aunt Elsie.

She played the first part that made everything seem to go dark and the stars come out, and all the other wonderful things happen. Then she sang the first two lines; and then she turned and held out her hands to him.

"Don't speak!" she asked him. "Don't speak. Hear it all through—my magic spell." Then she sang without the piano; and he held her hands, first one and then the other; and she sang it right to the end. I never understood properly what happened then. He says that her wings broke out and she flew clean away with him; but if she did she must have brought him back again, for they had tea with the little people in the nursery, and laughed and played games and were happier than they had ever been before. The spell must have been very strong anyhow, for he said that he felt ten years younger, and he married her very quickly, and they have been married for two

years and he hasn't got over the enchantment yet. You see, "love" is a very mighty spell; mightier than "trouble" or "money" or anything.

What happened to the witch Scriba? Why, she turned out a very nice witch after all; quite the good kind and almost like a fairy godmother. She sent them a lovely wedding present; and when the enchanter went to thank her, she kept all the ogres waiting with their bags of gold, while she talked to him.

"My dear man," she said, "I didn't want *you*; but I wanted some little people very, very badly. Oh, you *don't* know what a hard spell trouble is!" And then she actually cried; and when she left off she turned so pale that he knew it *was* blood that she wrote her wonderful, wonderful spells with; and it was the spell of "trouble" that made her do it, and he

thought she had better use another spell instead.

And he said: "Dear lady, I think my little people would love you. Will you have some of them sometimes to stay with you? Perhaps they would enchant some of your trouble away."

She jumped up and shook his hand and said she should like that above everything. So they go to stay with her in turns, like *you* go to stay with Mrs. Maybury; and they enjoy themselves as much as *you* do. She declares that they have enchanted her with another spell, that makes her write the beautiful stories that Mrs. Maybury tells you, and you want to hear over and over again; and I think she is right. For you cannot enchant other people unless you are enchanted yourself; and the greatest of all enchantments is the one called "love"!

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## SPRING'S SINGING

By LLOYD ROBERTS

SPRING once more is here—  
Joyous, sweet, and clear—  
Singing down the leafless aisles  
To the budding year.

Her chanting is the thrush  
Through the twilight hush,  
And the silver tongues of waters  
Where the willows blush;

Stir of lifting heads  
Over violet beds;  
Piping of the first glad robin  
Through the greens and reds;

Croak of sullen crows  
When the south wind blows,  
Sighing in the shaggy spruces  
Wet with melted snows;

Whisper of the rain  
Down the hills again,  
And the heavy feet of waters  
Tramping on the plain.

Now the Goddess Spring  
Makes the woodlands ring,  
Bringing with a hundred voices  
Joy to everything.

# CONCERNING HEALTH

BY JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

*Author of "Cy Whittaker's Place," "Cap'n Eri," etc.*



SEE the doctor's team in front of Abe Leonard's place as I was comin' along down just now," observed Asaph Tidditt, pulling his chair up to the table and elevating his chin in order to tuck a napkin beneath it. "Wonder who's sick there?"

"I don't know," commented Keturah Bangs, who, at the foot of the long table, was busy with the teapot. "Land sakes! with the family them Leonards have got, all jammed together in that little house, it's a wonder to me there ain't somebody ailin' all the time. Nine children, and Abe and Mary T., and her mother and his father, and their cousin Phineas from Brockton, that's out of a job and is down here livin' on them for his health, and two cats and a dog—well, if 'twas me, I should expect anything from croup to hydrophoby. I'd hire a doctor by the year and save money; that is, if I could hire the right kind."

Bailey Bangs, Keturah's husband, having, by long and strenuous marital experience, acquired wisdom of a certain brand, announced emphatically that them was his sentiments. Then he passed his plate for another piece of pie—and got it.

"Humph!" sniffed Miss Angelina Phinney, who sat next Mr. Tidditt, "well, I ain't so sure. I've noticed that folks who are always chasin' doctors generally needs 'em. As for me, I rise above such things. When I have a feelin' in my physical nature that ain't just right I put my foot down on it hard, and I feel better right off, too."

There was an assumption of superiority in this declaration which seemed to arouse resentment in a portion of the company.

Following it came a pause in the conversation, a momentary lull, during which certain individuals buckled on their armor and prepared for combat. The light of battle gleamed in Mr. Tidditt's eyes. But, before he could accept the challenge, Alpheus Smalley, who suffered from the chronic conviction that he was a humorist, launched a shaft of wit.

"Well, I don't know, Angie," he observed. "I've got a corn on my physical nature and when I put my foot down on it I don't feel better—much. Haw! haw!"

Miss Phinney waited until Alpheus had finished his lonely laugh.

"Humph!" she sniffed scornfully, "anybody with sense would know that I didn't mean my real foot. I was referrin' to my mental foot, the foot in my head, my *will* foot—you know what I mean, or you ought to."

Asaph was ready now.

"Oh, well!" he said, "everybody knows you're a Christian Scientist, Angie."

This was the first gun. Miss Phinney whirled to face the enemy.

"Then they know what ain't so," she declared, with emphasis. "I ain't a Scientist. Scientists believe there ain't any such thing as sickness. I don't believe that. What I do believe is that sickness can be put down, overcome by your psychical force without medicine. For instance, s'pose you, Alpheus, should say to yourself, 'I realize that I've got a corn, but what is such an insignificant thing as that compared to Me? Shall I—a free human soul—be conquered by a corn? No, sir! I'll rise above it; I'll—'"

"It's when I rise above it that it hurts most," interrupted Alpheus. Miss Phinney ignored the triviality.



"What I mean," she said, "is that I am unconquerable. My personality is mine to make or to break. I say to myself 'I am I and you can't beat me. You can't—you sicknesses and—and corns and things—you can't master Me; I'll master you.' And when I can't do it all by myself I won't pamper my diseases with drugs and medicine, I'll go to them whose wills are strong and free—them that's made a specialty of such things—and get their wills to help mine. My goodness me! ain't the magazines and papers full of cases where folks have been cured, just by mind alone, of all sorts of troubles? They *had* 'em, too. I give in to that. That's where I don't agree with the Scientists. They had 'em, but—"

"Oh, I see!" cut in Matilda Tripp, the widow, "you're one of them New Thinkers; that's what you are."

"Yes," declared Angeline, "I am. I'm a New Thinker, and the land knows I'm better for it."

"I was readin' a New Thought book up to the library t'other day," remarked Bailey. "There was a lot in it I didn't understand. The name of it was 'The Higher Altitudes, or the Soarin' of Self.' I copied that name down so's to ask Whit about it next time I see him. I remember it said 'twas good exercise to lay down on your back and cross your feet and keep sayin' over and over 'I AM! I AM! I AM!' After you'd said that for a considerable spell, the book said, you'd begin to realize you was."

Miss Phinney nodded. "Um-hum!" she observed. "That develops your personality and makes it stronger. I've tried it often. It's a great help."

"Yes," replied Bailey dubiously. "Well, I couldn't make much out of it, but 'twas so high recommended I thought I'd have a try. All it done to me was put me to sleep, and then Ketury she came along and roused me out to fetch a hod of coal."

"So you realized *she* was, hey?" crowed Smalley.

"That's only one side of it, anyhow," went on Angie. "The main thing is the curin' of disease by—ahem—psycho-hypnotic suggestion. Oh, you can set there and tee-hee, Alpheus Smalley. It's a fact, and there's miracles bein' done with it

every day. You believe in it, Cap'n Whittaker, now don't you?"

Captain Cy Whittaker was taking his meals at the "perfect boarding house" that week. Mrs. Whittaker—formerly Phoebe Dawes, the school-teacher—had in company with Emily, their adopted daughter, gone to Boston for a fortnight's visit. Captain Cy nodded calmly.

"Sure!" he declared, with emphasis. "Yes, indeed, I believe in it. Especially that crossin' your feet and doin' the great 'I AM' exercise. That's my belief to a T."

Everyone was surprised.

"Well," affirmed Keturah Bangs, "fur's I'm concerned I'm an allopath, and nobody can make me believe you can cure disease just by sayin' things. You don't really believe it, Cap'n Whittaker?"

Captain Cy pushed back his empty plate.

"Sartin I do," he said. "I've seen it work. When I was a little shaver I had warts. I had more warts than anything else, except original sin. Each of my hands looked like one of them telescope photographs of the moon. There was a fortune teller come to town once and mother got him to read my palm, so's to see what I'd be when I grew up. After he'd spent a half day on it he said, nigh as he could find out, I'd be a volcano—my life line was one continuous eruption. Ma was worried, but I wan't; I knew what would fix warts. I went to see old Aunt Tabby Peters, who lived up to the west'ard and was half squaw and half crazy. She said a charm over me in the dark of the moon with her back to the church, and inside of fifteen years my hands was as smooth as a book agent's remarks. I ain't had a wart since."

"Oh, well!" was Mrs. Tripp's comment on this confession. "She thought you was serious. 'Course if you're only foolin'—"

"Foolin'?" said the captain. "Not a mite of it. The warts was cured. What cured 'em? Not the medicine that ma gave me; I poured the bulk of that out of the window onto the bushes underneath. Seems to me we'd set out some shagbark hickory and the only thing that come up was a slippery elm; however, I ain't sure. I know ma said 'twas powerful medicine. But it didn't cure me, and if Aunt Tabby's charm wasn't responsible what was?"

"Believe in mind cures?" he continued. "You bet I do! When I was young the Come-Outers had a minister who was strong for 'layin' on of hands.' If you had the mumps or yellow jaundice or ship fever he'd come around and rub you, and if you didn't get well 'twas because you didn't go to the right church. He laid hands on the school-teacher for partial paralysis of the right arm, and teacher passed the treatment on to me for whisperin'. And both cures was complete, I'll swear to that. But you had to believe you was bein' cured, else 'twouldn't work. I didn't have a bit of trouble with *my* belief.

"In the old times, they tell me, the kings and queens of Europe used to have special days for curin' folks of sciatica, 'King's Evil' they called it. On them days the poor people would come round to have the king touch 'em and go away rejoicin'. The rich people was 'touched' every time the rulin' family went broke—wan't any special days for that—but that was for dropsy of the pocketbook. 'Twas sciatica the paupers was touched for, and history says they was cured by the cartload. 'There!' says His Majesty, 'you're cured. Clear out! Sergeant at Arms, have the spearsmen remove the convalescents and open the windows.' Did you ever hear of a pauper that was touched sayin' he wasn't cured? I guess not! What's that but mind?"

"Josiah Dimick tells me that he had an Uncle Simeon who was strong on rheumatism and rum sweats. Every time he had a pain or got thirsty he'd sing out for his wife and the rum bottle. Then he'd set down in a cane chair, all wrapped up in comforters and quilts, and Josiah's Aunt Sarah would put a pan with a little alcohol in it underneath him and set it afire. Likewise he'd drink about half a pint of Old Medford, hot as he could pour it down. Nothin' but rum and alcohol would do, you understand. They'd tried other liquids, but no help at all; must be a *rum* sweat. One time he was took awful bad. Said his legs was all but paralyzed. They had to carry him to the chair. Then Aunt Sarah discovered—I don't know how it happened in that house—that the rum was about all out, only enough left for the internal part of the treatment. So Josiah, who was there at the time, without sayin' anything to anybody filled the pan 'most

full with kerosene oil and touched it off. Work? Well, I guess! Josiah says he never see paralysis cured so quick. The patient never stopped runnin' till he got to the creek and jumped in."

"That wan't mind," declared Asaph contemptuously.

"What was it then? You never would have cured Sim Dimick by *kerosene* sweats, never in this world—if he'd known it beforehand."

"Rubbish!" exclaimed Bailey. "You're talkin' nonsense, Cy, and you know it. You don't take no stock in this ere 'seasick hyp—hyp—'"

"Hooray!" cut in Mr. Smalley, with humorous intentions. He was ignored, of course.

"This ere what-d'ye-call-it 'suggestion' that Angie tells about. You don't believe in that?"

"The testimony of thousands—" began Miss Phinney. Captain Cy struck the table with his palm.

"That it!" he cried. "I do believe in it—and why? Why, because of the thousands it's curin' and their testimony. You can't go back on testimony. That's why I believe in Christian Science and layin' on of hands and rum sweats and wart charms and touchin' for King's Evil and herb doctors and the blue-glass cure. You remember when everybody that was anyways progressive had a few square yards of blue glass let into the side of their house so's they could set side of it and feel the blue sunshine makin' red blood? 'Course you do. And it made it, too, they testified to it. And 'twan't only a few years ago that the folks in Copley Square, up to Boston, used to get up an appetite for breakfast by watchin' a parcel of bald-headed fat men and slim single ladies gallopin' round the grass plot in front of the Art Museum with no shoes and stockin's on their 'little-pigs-goes-to-market.' The Kneipp Cure, that was, if I recollect right. And it helped—land, yes! hundreds was helped by it.

"I'm strong for the Kneipp Cure; likewise for liver pads and electric belts and patent medicines—"

"Well," broke in Mrs. Tripp, "some patent medicines are splendid, I don't care what you say. Since I've took Blatt's Burdock Bitters I've felt like another woman."

"Don't doubt it a mite. And, if you take enough of it at once, you can see the other woman when you look in the glass. Fifty-seven per cent alcohol and all conscientious scruples removed ought to—however, I'm for it. See what it's done for millions of sufferers all over this broad land. Names and tintypes right in the newspapers every day; all you got to do, if you're a doubtin' Thomas, is to write 'em and they'll confirm. Same with all the doctor people who advertise. See the cures *they* make. If I had my way I'd put up a statue to 'em; Lydia Pinkham kneelin' to receive Father John's blessin' and Munyon pointin' aloft and tellin' us to hope."

"Ah ha!" cried Asaph, "you're off the track now, Cy. They're doctors, not mind healers. We all believe in doctors. As for me, my motto is 'Put your trust in reg'lar ordained physicians and stick to 'em and believe what they tell you.'"

"I'm with you there, too," declared Captain Cy. "I'm all for doctors myself. Only it's kind of hard to know which place to stick. You're a homœopath, Ase, and you have your symptoms treated with mild doses and frequent. And Ketury and Bailey are allopathic and take big doses which ain't mild and are supposed to work at their sufferin's the opposite way from what your sugar pills do. And Josiah Dimick he's osteopath, and when he has a stomachache he's put on a table and kneaded and pounded till he ain't sure he's got any stomach. And neither one of them three schools admit that there's anything good in t'other two, and yet look at the way we're all cured by 'em."

"I'll stick to a good doctor, all right. You bet! And I'll believe what they tell me, too. When one discovers that alcohol's a food, I'll believe that; and when the next one says it's rank poison I'm with him. I'll believe we'd ought to drink less water at meals—or more—and take cold baths—or hot—or none, 'cordin' to the prescriptions given out simultaneous by the three most eminent practitioners in the country. I'll believe vegetable diet will help me same as it does a cow, or that it

won't, and I'd ought to eat the cow. I'll believe in——"

"Humph!" grunted Mrs. Bangs, "it's my belief you don't really believe in anything."

"Yes, I do. I believe in everything. How can I help it, with ten thousand cured examples for every kind of doctorin' ready to prove their cures? I'm getting along in years now, but if I was younger and had the time, I'd take more care of my health. I'd lay out a reg'lar programme. Mornin's, about two or three o'clock, I'd get up and take a cold bath and then a hot one and some exercise and some Kneipp Cure and have a vegetarian breakfast, with 'Expurgated Oats' to feed my brains and Near-Coffee—because there's a reason. Then I'd start in with a dose of sass'parilla or Burdock Bitters and set under blue glass a spell, after which I'd have a rum sweat and a layin' on of hands treatment with some hypnotic suggestions on the side. Then I'd put on my liver pad and electric belt and be ready to go see an osteopath. After lunch, which would be on raw meat and alcohol, I'd start homœopathic and then——"

"Oh, belay!" interrupted Mr. Tid-ditt, rising and folding his napkin. "What stuff you are talkin'! 'Bout a week of that programme and you'd be dead."

"No, I wouldn't. I'd be so everlastin' healthy that I'd turn Christian Scientist and declare there wasn't any such thing as disease."

Mrs. Tripp pushed back her chair. "After all," she sighed, "when you consider all the kinds of doctorin' and curin' there is, it's a wonder anybody's able to keep well at all."

"Wonder anybody's able to keep sick, you mean. There's four million ways to keep well."

"How silly you do run on, Cy Whit-taker! Able to keep sick! For the land sakes who *wants* to keep sick?"

"Phin Leonard does," replied Captain Cy, taking his hat from the rack in the hall. "If he got well he'd have to stop spongin' on Abe and go to work."

# THE MARKET PLACE FOR MONEY

BY FRANK FAYANT



THREE crimes there were in the Middle Ages in England:

*First.*—To engage in trade for gain.

*Second.*—To take interest on the loan of money.

*Third.*—To speculate.

The Church taught that trade was very sinful, and even to this day the English aristocracy speaks with contempt of "tradesmen." The scholars wrote essays on the question, "Is it right to buy cheap and sell dear?" They agreed that the instant a man bought and sold merchandise for the lust of gain he was committing a sin. "He who buys a thing in order to sell it, unaltered, for gain, is the merchant driven from the Temple." But, despite the teachings of the Church, trade became a part of English life, and in time England became the world's greatest trading nation.

"Lend, hoping for nothing gain," had the force of a divine prohibition of any payment for the use of money. The "usury" of the Bible was "interest," not, as we use the word to-day, exorbitant interest. He who took interest was a heretic. One of the many canons of the Church against this sin ran: "Since in almost every place the crime of usury has become so prevalent that many persons give up all other business and become usurers, as if it were permitted, regarding not its prohibition in both testaments, we ordain that manifest usurers shall not be admitted to communion, nor, if they die in their sin, receive Christian burial, and that no priest shall accept their alms." But toward the end of the Middle Ages, when men began to venture into larger trade, they were eager to pay interest for the loan of capital, and the laws against interest gradually became dead letters.

Speculation began with trade, as an inseparable part of it, but it was prohibited time and time again in the statutes of the realm. For six centuries England made laws against speculation, and it was not until the middle of the last century that restrictions on speculation were finally removed. In Germany and some of the American States are still to be found reminders of these English laws of the Middle Ages.

In the records of the city of London we read that in 1364 John-at-Wood, a baker, was charged before the common sergeant with the following offense: "Whereas one Robert de Cawode had two quarters of wheat for sale in the common market on the Pavement within Newgate, he, the said John, cunningly and by secret words whispering in his ear, fraudulently withdrew Cawode out of the common market; and then they went together into the Church of the Friars Minor, and there John bought the two quarters at 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel, being 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. over the common selling price at that time in that market; to the great loss and deceit of the common people, and to the increase of the dearth of corn." At-Wood denied the offense, and "put himself on the country." Thereupon a jury of the venue of Newgate was empaneled, who gave as verdict that At-Wood had not only thus bought the corn, but had afterwards returned to the market, and boasted of his misdoing—"this he said and did to increase the dearth of corn." Accordingly he was sentenced to be put into the pillory for three hours, and one of the sheriffs was directed to see the sentence executed and proclamation made of the cause of his punishment.

This offense was called engrossing or forestalling in the Middle Ages. The first legal definition of the offense is found in

this thirteenth-century law (Henry III): "Especially be it commanded on the part of our lord the king, that no forestaller be suffered to dwell in any town—a man who is openly an oppressor of the poor, and the public enemy of the whole community and country; a man who, seeking his own evil gain, oppressing the poor and deceiving the rich, goes to meet corn, fish, herrings, or other articles for sale as they are being brought by land or water, carries them off, and contrives that they shall be sold at a dearer rate. He deceives merchant strangers bringing merchandise by offering to sell their wares for them, and telling them that they might be dearer sold than the merchants expected; and so by craft and subtlety deceives his town and his country. He that is convict thereof, the first time shall be amerced and lose the things so bought, and that according to the custom and ordinance of the town; he that is convict the second time shall have judgment of the pillory; at the third time he shall be imprisoned and make fine; the fourth time he shall abjure the town. And this judgment shall be given upon all manner of forestallers, and likewise upon those that have given them counsel, help, or favour."

"The popular fear of engrossing or forestalling may be compared to the popular terrors and suspicions of witchcraft," says Adam Smith. "The unfortunate wretches accused of this latter crime were not more innocent of the misfortunes imputed to them than those who have been accused of the former."

In America to-day we are pretty well agreed that it is right to engage in trade for gain, that it is right to lend our money at interest, but we are not all of one mind about speculation—that is, organized speculation as we see it in Wall Street to-day. Many honest folk believe that the country would be better off without the Stock Exchange, and it is likely to be a good many years before the widespread prejudice against speculation will follow the way of the prejudice against trade and interest.

The honest English folk of the Middle Ages despised trade because the early traders were usually men who, by trickery and deception, made very bad bargains for their victims. Trading and cheating were nearly synonymous.

Likewise, the right of Christian burial was denied money lenders because of the extortionate usury they exacted, and their persecution of unfortunate debtors. Many men were ruined by the money lenders. Usury (interest) and robbery were nearly synonymous.

The goods of forestallers were confiscated because they were looked upon as oppressors of the poor. Later on, with the growth of the public trading companies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, speculation was condemned because of the great losses borne by reckless speculators. Speculation and gambling were nearly synonymous.

It was the abuse of trade, credit, and speculation that aroused the hatred of the honest English folk. To-day the most of us no longer look upon the tradesman as a cheat, or the banker as a robber, but a good many of us still regard the speculator as a gambler.

Trade, credit, and speculation all developed as the result of man's needs. In the primitive community, where each man provided his own food, shelter, and clothing, there was no need for trade. But then co-operation began. Some men hunted and fished, obtaining more food than they needed. Other men made clothing in excess of their needs. Others found building to their liking. These men bartered with one another, exchanging their surplus products or labor. The division of labor grew; trade was extended. Later on men ventured into larger trade, forming partnerships. A company of men with capital would fit out a sailing ship to trade with distant companies. They made gains in trade and embarked on enterprises still larger. They furnished some capital out of their own purses, and borrowed the rest. So modern business credit began. In the seventeenth century, in England, the zest for commercial conquest led to the organization of bigger and bigger partnerships, in which many people shared, and it came to be the custom to divide these partnerships into many shares for sale to whoever would buy. So began our modern stock companies, and our modern stock speculation. The invention of the steam engine—with the factory system and the railroads developing from it—opened the modern era of public companies and stock



exchanges. Commercial enterprises have grown to great magnitude with the extension of our system of coöperation.

"It is not by virtue of a coincidence," says a distinguished French scholar, "that the same word is employed to designate the labor of philosophers and the enterprise of those who, as the result of extended reflection and carefully considered calculations, believe that they can foresee the fluctuations in price of things necessary to humanity, and direct their acts accordingly."

One of the great opponents of the whole system of modern business truly defined speculation when he said: "Speculation is nothing else than the intellectual conception of the different ways in which labor, credit, transportation, and exchange can unite in production. It is speculation which discovers riches, which invents the most economical means of securing them, and which multiplies them by new forms or combinations of credit, transportation, circulation, and exchange, by creating new wants or by the incessant redistribution of fortunes." And the founder of our modern political economy wrote about "those who are called philosophers or men of speculation, whose trade it is to observe everything."

Speculation has an evil sound to many good folks' ears. It at once suggests bucket-shop gambling and the hazardous trading in securities on slender margins. But all business is speculation, and if the American people for the past hundred years had put their money only into gilt-edged investments we would still be reading by candlelight and riding in stagecoaches. Speculation and industrial progress go hand in hand. It was a hazardous speculation that built the first railroad across the Rockies; it was a still more hazardous speculation that rescued that property from bankruptcy. In the 90's, when the pessimists thought the country was going to the demnition bow-wows, a fox-eyed little speculator went from banker to banker in Wall Street, saying: "Here's the stock of the bankrupt Union Pacific selling for almost nothing; let's buy control, assess ourselves \$15 a share, and make a railroad out of it"; the conservative old bankers threw up their hands in amazement. They wouldn't embark on such a hazardous speculation. But Harriman persisted, found men who were willing to join him in the speculation, and

we all now marvel at the result. Without speculators like Harriman and Hill the railroads beyond the Mississippi would still be "streaks of rust"—if there were any railroads at all.

But, because speculation is the leaven of industrial progress, it doesn't follow that every man with a few dollars in his pocket should plunge into speculation—whether it is buying building lots, eggs, or railroad shares. Speculation, especially our modern system of margin speculation, is a highly useful factor in our industrial life; but trading on margin is a hazardous undertaking, and nine tenths of the players lose. The trouble with the average American is that he wants to make too much money in too short a time. Any candid Wall Street broker will tell you that the habitual margin speculators lose year in and year out. The man who neglects his regular day's work to attempt to trade in and out of the market is not only pretty sure of losing his money, but, unless he has an unusually strong character, he will unfit himself for any serious work.

Money may be made in Wall Street, just as it may be made in merchandising or manufacture or agriculture or mining—by the exercise of ordinary business common sense. "The men who have made the big fortunes in America," said Mr. Morgan the other day, "are those who have been bulls on the country." One of the Standard Oil capitalists said some time ago: "A man who hasn't made a fortune in America in the past ten years can't blame the country." In this period railroad dividends have increased 250 per cent; steel production, 240 per cent; bank deposits, 160 per cent—our industrial progress has been astounding. And the men who have made fortunes have been those who have believed in the country year in and year out. The conservative investor, with a surplus that he can spare for investment, has more than a reasonable chance of making a profit by buying good securities in panic periods and selling them in boom times. This may take him to Wall Street only once in a year or two. But the credulous fortune-chaser, with a lust for untold-for wealth, who blindly tries to guess the daily riddle of the ticker, and thereby abuses a highly useful agent of our economic life, is on the road to disaster.

Now, let us see what use Wall Street

serves in our modern system of commercial coöperation in big enterprises.

Not so far from New York there lies a fertile valley, on the line of one of the great railroads. It is dotted with prosperous manufacturing towns, while on the uplands are productive farms and dairies. Some time ago the progressive people of the valley felt the need of better means of interurban travel. They wanted electric railways to parallel the steam road. But trolleys would cost millions of dollars, and while many of the manufacturers, merchants, and farmers had wealth, they were using their wealth in other ways. They did not have millions to spare to build trolleys that might not be profitable. They were willing to coöperate with one another, but they needed the coöperation of other people with capital who, perhaps, had never seen this valley.

All over the country are successful men who have surplus capital. They are not ready to risk all their surplus in one uncertain venture, but they are willing to risk a small part of it. It is the business of Wall Street to bring these men together in providing funds for big enterprises. To build the many miles of trolley in this valley meant the expenditure of some millions of dollars. Wall Street provided the money. Now, among men with surplus capital, whether they be small investors with a few dollars in the bank or rich capitalists with millions, you will find some who are willing to take a small risk for a small, very certain, fixed gain, others who will take a larger risk for a larger, less certain, fixed gain, and still others who will take a very large risk in the hope of making a very large gain. Wall Street brings these investors together in one undertaking—a public company, with bonds, preferred stock, and common stock.

Now, in Wall Street, where men make a life study of finance, everyone is a specialist. Some men know about copper, others about steel, others about railroads; some are specialists in foreign exchange, others in commercial credits, others in stock trading. To a banking house, making a specialty of electric railway securities, came some of the enterprising capitalists of the valley with their project for building trolleys. The bankers advised them to raise enough money in the valley to build a short

piece of road connecting two towns. Then, after this was in operation, they could come to Wall Street for more capital, for then they would have something concrete on which to appeal to capital. The section of road was therefore built by coöperation among the people of the valley. A small stock company was formed; the shares were sold to the men of means in the valley towns, and with this money the nucleus of the road was built. This proved a success in a few months, and then the promoters went back to Wall Street for more funds. The bankers agreed to "underwrite" a bond issue for an extension to a third town; that is, they agreed to provide the funds for the work, taking the bonds as piece by piece was completed. For their risk in providing capital for an uncertain venture the bonds were sold to them at a discount, and a bonus in common stock was given with the bonds. The bankers reduced their risk by selling a part of their underwriting to other banking houses and trust companies. This is one of the many forms of coöperation within Wall Street.

After the extension had been built, and the earnings had shown a good surplus over the bond interest, the underwriters in Wall Street began to find a market for their bonds at a profit, selling many of them to investors in the valley. The success of this stretch of line led to the formation of similar companies in other parts of the valley. After several years, more than a hundred miles of road were in operation. Then all of the small companies were combined in one big company. Now there is a ten-million dollar company doing a profitable business, paying its interest charges regularly and a small dividend on the common stock. Besides, it pays regular dividends on an issue of preferred stock, which was sold largely to local investors to provide funds for extensions and improvements. All of the securities of the company have been sold by Wall Street to investors—the most of them in the valley itself.

The work Wall Street did in this electric-railway enterprise was to provide temporarily the money needed to start it going, and then shift the burden to investors outside of Wall Street. This is Wall Street's great work—directing the flow of capital into profitable channels and thus promoting the country's industrial growth. To Wall

Street flows all idle capital seeking work, and to Wall Street come all big enterprises seeking capital. Through the agency of Wall Street the savings of millions of thrifty people every year build railroads, raise factories, dig mines—they carry on a myriad of enterprises.

Modern commercial ventures have grown so big that they cannot be carried on without the coöperation of armies of investors. This is particularly true of railroads. A railroad needs \$100,000,000 to build a 2,000-mile extension to the Coast. The raising of such an enormous fund of money by a single company in the course of a few months would be an impossible task without our modern financial machine. Wall Street makes the work easy. The company's thousands of shareholders have the first right to subscribe to the new stock; shareholders who do not exercise the right find, on the Stock Exchange, men ready to buy their "rights." Or, if times are bad and the markets are weak, there are big banking houses that will underwrite any unsold part of the issue, taking the chance of finding a better market when times are better.

Wall Street provides a very large part of this \$100,000,000, and carries the burden until the stock is absorbed by investors. Speculators buy blocks of the new stock on the Exchange, paying only \$10 a share out of their own purses; their brokers obtain the bulk of the purchase money from the banks by using the stock as collateral. Investors, likewise, may buy the stock on margin, just as a man buys a house on margin, with the expectation of paying the balance later on. The company's big shareholders subscribe to large blocks of stock, but very likely they obtain the bulk of the money in loans at the banks. In the event of a \$100,000,000 railroad stock issue being announced at an unfavorable time, \$80,000,000 might have to be provided by Wall Street until a market could be found among investors. Wall Street does this almost automatically. Capitalists, investors, speculators, syndicates, subscribe for stock, borrowing the bulk of the purchase money from the banks. Here, again, is coöperation. The funds loaned on this stock belong to thousands of depositors spread over the country. Several years ago, one of our greatest railroads, in need

of new capital, would have failed to sell its mass of new shares had not Wall Street carried the burden on borrowed funds for many months until investors came into the market to buy. When burdens of this character become too heavy for Wall Street to carry with entire safety, then we see the coöperation between the world markets. Wall Street shifts a part of its burden to London, Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam, where the savings of thrifty Europeans are obtained for American enterprises, either as direct investments or as loans. This may be done by the sale of our securities on the foreign exchanges, or by loans from foreign banks on our securities as collateral.

Thousands of millions of new capital will be needed by the railroads in the course of the next few years to keep pace with this country's marvelous industrial growth. Without the modern financial machine the raising of these huge amounts would be an impossibility. All the parts of the machine have developed in response to modern needs. To provide thousands of millions there must be the continuous market for securities where men may freely buy and sell, there must be great reservoirs of money where loans may be obtained on these securities while investors are absorbing them, and there must be the army of speculators ready at all times to risk their capital in the securities market. The criticism is made that the market is too big, that the banks are too big, that speculation is too big. But this is a big country with big undertakings, and the machine must fit the work.

No part of the modern coöperative financial machine is more misunderstood than the Stock Exchange itself. Many honest folk believe it is an evil that should be wiped out of existence; many more believe that we could get along without it. The attacks on the securities market in the twentieth century are as violent as the attacks on money lending at interest in the Dark Ages. There is this difference, however: when the Church excommunicated men for exacting pay for the use of money there were economists who sought to prove by logic that interest was wrong, but to-day there is not an economist of distinction who does not teach that the Stock Exchange is a highly necessary part of the modern indus-

trial machine. The earlier economists devoted very little attention to speculation, but with the rapid growth of industry and commerce since the construction of railroads was begun, there has been a corresponding development of the machinery of speculation, and scientific inquiry into speculation is now a part of economic study.

"The success or failure of a man engaged in manufacturing, in transportation, or in agriculture," says Hadley, "depends more upon his skill as a prophet than upon his industry as a producer."

All modern industry is based on the practice of risking present possessions for future gain. The greater the risk, the greater must be the possible gain. A wise man will not enter on a hazardous undertaking like mining unless he believes that the profits may be very large, while he is ready to loan his money on a good mortgage for a mere five per cent. All profits in excess of pure interest are gained only by risk, and are, therefore, speculative. Some men take very little risk in their business or their investments, reducing their speculation on the future to a minimum. They are content to be producers rather than prophets. The conservative village merchant is a type of this kind of man. Other men take big risks, endeavoring to make large gains by wise prophecy. Harriman is a man of this type. The prophets are the men who have made the great commercial nations.

Men with the speculative temperament naturally drift to the money market, because here are the greatest opportunities for making large gains. And so there has grown up a distinct speculative class, performing a well-defined task—risk-bearing—in the modern coöperative industrial scheme. The laborer, the entrepreneur (or manager of labor), the capitalist and the speculator each has economic function.

The distinct position the speculator holds in the economic scheme, and the invaluable service he performs for his fellow men, have only been recognized by economists in recent years. The modern speculator is the risk-bearer. As the speculative risks of commerce and industry have grown, with the enormous industrial advance of the world since the invention of the steam engine, the speculative class has arisen to assume a part of the risks. The speculators bear the risks, and accordingly as they are

wise in their measuring of the future, they profit in their work.

The result of the rapid growth of the speculative class in numbers and intelligence has been that the inherent risks of industry and commerce have been lessened to the managers of production, and profits have been lowered for the benefit of the consumers. "The function of speculation is to relieve trade of the risks of fluctuating values by providing a class always ready to take or deliver property at a market price," says Emery, "and in so doing to direct commodities to their most advantageous uses, and to direct the investment of capital into the most profitable channels by fixing for commodities and securities comparative prices for delivery at different times and places."

Most of the attacks on Wall Street have been directed against the forms of speculation rather than speculation itself. The three features of organized speculation that have inspired all the legislative efforts to restrict the exchanges are:

1. Buying and selling securities and commodities on borrowed money—margin speculation.
2. Buying and selling for future delivery.
3. Selling what one does not own at the time of sale—"short" selling.

Margins, futures, and short sales are the very framework of our whole modern business structure. Without the free use of them we would revert to the Middle Ages. We are enabled to do business on margins, whether buying securities or building a house, because of the universal use of the credit system. The use of margins increases the risk of loss and the extent of possible gain. The whole banking system—every bank in every town in the country—is an institution run to enable men to do business on margins. This is the great service the banks perform in the coöperative scheme.

The manufacturer with \$100,000 capital, by obtaining a "line of credit" at the banks of \$200,000, increases his gains. If he makes ten per cent on this \$300,000 capital, or \$30,000, and pays \$10,000 interest at the banks, leaving \$20,000 net, he has a profit of twenty per cent on his own margin capital, or double the actual profit of the business on the whole capital. Similarly the merchant, with a comparatively small margin, obtains credit from the

jobbers, and turns a small profit on the business into a large profit on his margin capital. The builder uses \$20,000 margin and \$80,000 borrowed money and puts up a flat house. His net rental, after payment of taxes, insurance, repairs, and maintenance, is \$8,000, or eight per cent on the money. He pays \$4,000 interest on the mortgage, leaving for his own profit, \$4,000, which is twenty per cent on his \$20,000 investment. A builder, therefore, with \$100,000 to invest, can build one flat house, making a profit of \$8,000 a year, or, by borrowing money, build five flat houses, yielding a profit of \$20,000 on his investment. A railroad company takes \$50,000,000 of shareholders' money and \$100,000,000 of bondholders' four-per-cent money, and builds a road that earns \$15,000,000 net, or ten per cent on the money. After paying \$4,000,000 interest to the bondholders there is left \$11,000,000 for the shareholders, or twenty-two per cent on their investment, more than double the profit they would make without the use of borrowed capital. An investor, in a period, of industrial depression, finds good railroad stocks selling on a six-per-cent basis. He invests \$10,000 in the best stocks, using \$8,000 of money borrowed from the bank at four per cent and \$2,000 margin. If, in the boom that follows the depression, these stocks advance fifty per cent in market price, he makes \$5,000, or two hundred and fifty per cent, profit on his venture.

The smaller the margin, the greater the risk of loss and the greater the possible gain. Slender margins are as unwise as overextended credits in business. The careful speculators use very large margins, while the plungers trade on the smallest possible margins. All through our modern industrial life, credit is the leaven of all business, and the use of cheap borrowed capital to increase business profits on margin capital has been the greatest single force in the rapid upbuilding of the leading commercial nations.

Buying and selling for future delivery and short sales are closely related. "Futures" in the cotton and wheat markets perform a service of inestimable value to producers and consumers. They lessen the risks to producers and therefore lessen the prices to consumers. If a cotton manufac-

turer receives an order for goods to be delivered several months hence he goes short. He orders the yarn from the spinner, who goes short. The spinner at once protects himself against fluctuations in the raw cotton market by buying the cotton in the future market, not from the planter but from the speculator. In this manner the manufacturer may make a price to-day for goods to be delivered in four months, and have no care over the movement of prices for the raw material. Likewise, the cotton planter may protect himself against an expected decline in the market, as the result of a heavy crop, by selling his crop short months ahead of the picking. Nearly all price risks in the cotton trade are thus shifted to the speculative market, and the facility with which this market bears the burden depends solely on its broadness. In the grain market the pit performs the same service.

And the short-sellers—the "bears"—what of them? They are pictured as terrible fellows, depriving the farmer and the planter of their just gains, and the innocent investor of his property. But the short-sellers, who sell what they don't own, are absolutely essential in the markets—we could not do without them. They perform an economic function. The "bears" in the cotton market, by selling the raw material to manufacturers for future delivery, remove speculative risks from manufacture. So the wheat "bears" are the friends of the millers. Short-sellers steady the markets. On the securities market, when the people are frenziedly buying everything at high prices, the short-sellers put on the brakes and save the country from a debacle. When there is panic in the market the short-sellers, by their heavy purchases to take profits, are sometimes the only check to complete demoralization. They are the only ones who are free to buy in times of panic. Ethically, short-selling is as right as long-buying. If it is right to buy cheap to sell dear, it is right to sell dear to buy cheap.

A study of the big coöperative machine of Wall Street shows how in every phase it has been developed in response to real needs. It is so big and does such astounding things that it often alarms honest folk. But this is a big country, with big men and big enterprises. And so Wall Street is fashioned.



# THE SLOOP-RIGGED PALFREY

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

AN UNWRITTEN CHAPTER FROM ALEXANDRE DUMAS'

"THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO"



HAVING obtained the address of the person to whom the house in the Allee de Meillan belonged, Edmond Dantes next proceeded thither, and, under the name of Lord Wilmore, purchased the small dwelling for 10,000 francs more than it was worth. But that which raised public astonishment to a climax and set all speculations at defiance, was that this mysterious stranger was observed, that same evening, to enter a poor fisherman's hut in the village of the Catalans, and to pass more than an hour in inquiring after persons who had either been dead or gone away for more than fifteen or sixteen years. But on the following day the family from whom all these particulars had been asked received a handsome present, consisting of an entirely new fishing boat, with a full supply of excellent nets. The delighted recipients of these munificent gifts would gladly have poured out their thanks to their generous benefactor; but they had seen him, upon quitting the hut, merely give some orders to a sailor, and then, springing lightly on horseback, quit Marseilles by the Porte d'Aix.

"Ten thousand thunders!" cried the fisherman at the sight, but his wife, being less excitable, merely exclaimed: "Gracious heavens!"

Such of my readers as have made a pedestrian excursion to the south of France may perchance have noticed, midway between the town of Beaucaire and the village of Bellegarde, a small roadside inn, the Auberge of Pont du Garde. For nearly

eight years this auberge had been kept by a man and his wife, Gaspard Caderousse and La Carconte, and it was to reach this man, fifty miles as the crow flies from Marseilles, that Edmond Dantes, now Count of Monte Cristo, sprang lightly on horseback. Through the treason of this man and others Edmond Dantes had been, for the last long fourteen years, confined in the dungeons of the Château d'If, starving on bread and water, and he had been thrown there a few days after his return from a long voyage, for he was by occupation a sailor. Now the riches of Monte Cristo were his and he had undertaken his revenge.

"Penelon," he had said to his faithful servitor and fellow sailor, "when I shall have finished my work at Marseilles I go to the Auberge of Pont du Garde. Be ready with a steed."

The slightest wish of Monte Cristo was a command; his commands were edicts more powerful than those of the Czar of Russia. Penelon touched his cap, and when Edmond Dantes stepped from the fisher hut he was not compelled to wait; Penelon was already there with a prancing Hungarian palfrey. "Fair to middling," he said carelessly, and this, to Penelon, coming from the lips of his taciturn master, was tremendous praise.

And indeed the faithful fellow had done well in the hour allowed him. Even among those who were supposed to have the most exact knowledge of horses the Hungarian palfrey was supposed to be extinct, unless in the wilds of Hungary, inaccessible to man, and yet here Penelon stood holding by the bridle the most beautiful Hungarian



*"This is doubtless the rudder."*

palfrey the world had yet seen. Nor had he overlooked the accessories. The saddle was made of the finest Algerian kid studded with rose diamonds, while the bridle was of tested walrus skin, gold mounted and decorated with emeralds and rubies. The four feet of the matchless steed were shod with golden shoes, each nail being of finest platinum, and the head of each nail being set with a perfect topaz. But the thoughtfulness of Penelon was shown still more by another touch, for upon the sides of the steed he had had branded, in letters sixty centimeters (about two feet) tall, the monogram "E. D." on one side and "C. of M. C." on the other.

Having spent his youth and young manhood on a ship, and the next fourteen years in a subterranean dungeon, Edmond Dantes was a splendid judge of horses, and it was not necessary for him to ask Penelon which end was the bow of the horse, if, indeed, the good fellow could have told him. Therefore, upon leaving the hut, he merely felt in the tail pocket of his coat to see that

the bag containing the six or seven hundred diamonds he usually carried as small change was there, and then spoke to Penelon.

"Well," he said sharply, "the oars, my good fellow!"

For one instant Penelon hesitated, while the frown on Edmond Dantes' brow deepened.

"Monsieur le Comte," said Penelon meekly, "I think the horse is not a row-horse. Oars are not needed."

"Good!" said Dantes, "hoist the sail, then, and I will be off."

"Pardon, excellency," said the good Penelon, "but neither do I think this is a sail-horse. I inquired particularly before I made the purchase, and was told that it was a self-propeller, needing neither sail nor oars, but acting rather on the principle of the steamboat. All that is necessary, M. le Comte, is to get aboard and steer."

"Good!" said Dantes again. "I see that great improvements have been made in horses since—since I last took a voyage on one, so now—" He stopped suddenly and

looked at the palfrey with perplexity. "Penelon," he said severely, "do you mean to tell me you call this a properly outfitted horse?"

"Oh, excellency!" cried poor Penelon. "I have used three pints of diamonds——"

"Silence!" cried Dantes. "You speak to me of diamonds, and yet dare bring me a horse without a steering wheel. Yet even that I could forgive had the animal been supplied with a good rudder and tiller, although a steering wheel would be far more up to date. Explain yourself, Penelon!"

"Oh, my good master!" cried Penelon, casting himself at the Count's feet, "think not that I neglected it! Indeed, I spoke to the dealer about that very thing, nor would I be satisfied until he himself had got aboard the horse and showed me the method of steering, which is by the use of these walrus-skin tiller ropes."

As he said this the faithful fellow arose and touched the bridle, which the Count thereupon examined with great interest.

"I see!" said the Count thoughtfully, walking around the horse, "I see! This," touching the tail of the horse, "is doubtless the rudder, and these tiller ropes are connected with it in some inexplicable manner. Penelon, grasp the tiller ropes and throw the rudder two points to starboard."

Penelon did as he was told, taking the bridle firmly in his hand and giving it a strong pull, while the Count watched the Hungarian palfrey's tail closely. The tail did not move, but the head of the palfrey did.

"Ah!" said the Count. "Now, two points to larboard, Penelon!"

Penelon pulled the other rein. Again the head of the horse moved, but the tail remained motionless.

"Ah!" repeated the Count, with his sad smile. "It is plain that you know nothing of horses, Penelon. This," touching the tail of the horse, "is not the rudder at all, for the tiller ropes have no connection with



"'Play ball,' answered Penelon."

it. On the other hand, this," touching the head of the horse, "does move when the tiller ropes are pulled. This, then, is the rudder, and this end of the horse must be the bow, for the rudder is never on the bow of a craft. Penelon, had I not made this discovery I should have been trying to sail this craft stern-end to!"

Penelon was covered with confusion. He knew not what to say.

"Cheer up, however, my good fellow," said the Count graciously, "for no great harm has yet been done. Just maneuver the craft so that the bow shall point toward the Porte d'Aix, and in a moment I shall be off."

Penelon took the Hungarian palfrey by the tiller ropes and turned its tail toward the Porte d'Aix with great care. Putting his foot in the stirrup, with his face toward the same Porte, the Count seized the tiller ropes in his hands, and springing lightly into the saddle, cried, "I'm off!"

He was. Almost before he said it.

Luckily, the Porte d'Aix was but a few paces distant, and the Count accomplished his first intention, which was to quit the city of Marseilles by the Porte d'Aix.

Penelon, having less knowledge of horses, took more time to steer the Hungarian palfrey, bow end foremost, through the Porte d'Aix after his master, who, by the time he reached him, was standing to receive him.

"I call that," said the Count, with his usual modesty, "a mighty good jump, Penelon."

"Master, it was a marvelous jump," said the good fellow, overcome by admiration. "Is your excellency ready to—get aboard again?"

The Count looked down the road that led to Beaucaire. It seemed a hard, paved road.

"Yes," he said haughtily, and then, pointing with his hand, he said, "but you, good Penelon, might stand down the road there, some twenty feet, ready to catch me in case—in case I—I decide to jump again."

"Perhaps," ventured the faithful fellow, "if your excellency did not attempt to spring lightly to the deck, but, as one might say, shinned slowly up the side rigging, or climbed a tree and dropped cautiously down amidship, you would not—would not decide to jump again."

"The thought was in my mind," said the



"Regardless of the 900,000 francs in diamonds."

Count. "Not that I would have you think I do not like a little jumping exercise now and then, but because a horse may be in its nature like a canoe, and easily capsized if boarded too strenuously. I shall climb this wall, first bringing the palfrey alongside, and get aboard from there."

While he worked the horse out of the main channel of the road to the quiet grassy eddy, Penelon walked up the road and took his position, first moistening his hands by a mild expectoration, and then bending down and resting his hands on his knees.

"Are you ready?" asked the Count.

"Play ball!" answered Penelon, and the Count dropped into the saddle.

"A good catch; a very good catch!" said the Count warmly, as soon as Penelon had set him on the ground after catching him. "We are making excellent progress. We have come forty feet in but two jumps, and it is but seventy miles to the Auberge of Pont du Garde. I can make it in 9,260 jumps, Penelon!"

"Exactly 9,260 jumps," said Penelon, who was quick at figures.

"But, after all, that is a good many jumps," said the Count.

"I was about to say it," said Penelon,

"and, if your excellency will permit me to say so, that can hardly be called a voyage-a-la-horse which is made through the air. Your excellency said you were going to the Auberge of Pont du Garde on horseback."

The Count looked carefully on all sides.

"Penelon," he said in a low voice, "have you ever voyaged on a horse?"

"I am but a poor sailor man," said Penelon, "and if you mean to suggest that I board that Hungarian palfrey, I beg to give your worship two weeks notice, dated back two weeks. Jumping may be good exercise for the aristocracy, but it is against the rules of the merchant marine. I always get seasick on horseback."

"Coward!" hissed the Count.

"Yes, your royal highness," said Penelon meekly, "but that is neither here nor there. But I have been thinking, and the thought has come to me that perhaps I made a mistake in having the under side of the saddle studded with forty-carat diamonds. Perhaps the impact of your weight falling on the saddle may have driven the points of the diamonds into the back of the palfrey, which seems a high-spirited craft, thus causing it to—I should say, suggesting to you—Anyway, monsieur, maybe that is why you jumped."

No sooner had Penelon said this than the Count stripped the saddle from the back of the horse and threw it carelessly over the wall, regardless of the 900,000 francs in diamonds. In a few minutes more the back of the palfrey felt the weight of the Count, and the good Penelon threw his cap in the air with a hearty cheer, for the Count remained on the horse. What pride filled the good fellow's breast as he saw his beloved master astride the animal, and neither bouncing off nor falling off! A smile of indulgence crossed the Count's features at this evidence of his servant's emotion, but he said nothing. Gathering the tiller ropes in his hands he stared steadfastly out over the tail of the Hungarian palfrey and made a slight sound like sweethearts kissing under the light of the August moon. Slowly and majestically the horse moved away from its moorings, but to the consternation of the Count and the good Penelon it moved rudder-end foremost, and in a circle. The brave heart of the Count was filled with tumultuous agony, and he glanced over his shoulder at the rudder. Instantly his in-

tuitive sense told him what was the matter. The starboard tiller rope was drawn taut, while the larboard rope hung loose. He paid out on the starboard and drew in on the larboard, bringing the rudder straight. Immediately the course of the craft straightened, but still it moved backward, and in a few moments more the Count would have been once more inside the Porte d'Aix, had he not hastily dismounted and turned the craft.

"Penelon," he said, as he remounted with his face, as before, toward the tail, "this is a cranky craft, and inclined to travel stern-end forward, which leads me to believe that the machinery has been put in reversed. But that we are traveling toward the Auberge of Pont du Garde is the main thing after all, and by looking over my shoulder occasionally I shall be able to direct our course. I could, doubtless, ride more easily were I to turn about, with my face toward the rudder, on which the ears are, but it is not for the Count of Monte Cristo to make a spectacle of himself. If I——"

"Ship ahoy!" cried Penelon suddenly, "Breakers ahead!"

The Hungarian palfrey was, indeed, headed straight for a large pile of paving stones. Instinctively the Count pulled hard on the two tiller ropes, and a surprising thing happened. The craft stopped short and began moving in the opposite direction. Slowly, it is true, but none the less tail-end foremost. A proud smile lighted the face of Monte Cristo, while Penelon shouted with joy. Drawing taut both tiller ropes, but one more taut than the other, Monte Cristo felt the Hungarian craft turn slowly in the road and, urged by the taut tiller ropes, move with careful tread tail-end foremost in the direction of the Auberge of Pont du Garde.

"We are getting on famously," said the Count, as he leaned forward and patted the haunches of his faithful steed. "The secret is to keep a taut tiller, and saw a little when the craft seeks to slow up. The speed is not so brisk as walking afoot, but the motion is soothing, and if one's arms hold out one is pretty sure to get somewhere sometime. Penelon!"

At this cry of "Penelon!" the faithful fellow ran to the side of the craft.

"Master?" he queried anxiously, al-





*"It is not for the Count of Monte Cristo to make a spectacle of himself."*

though there seemed to be nothing wrong with either the craft, its gear, or its crew.

"Penelon," said the Count, "another such error and you leave my employ! Suppose this craft should get beyond my control—the tiller break, winds drive us out of our course, or danger loom suddenly ahead—what could I do? Penelon, where is the anchor?"

"Excellency, forgive," cried the poor fellow, falling on his knees.

"Enough!" said Monte Cristo, as he saw the tears roll down the face of this faithful servitor. "Once more I forgive you. But rig an anchor quickly, lest you would trust your master to, perhaps, awful horsewreck!"

With trembling hands Penelon bound three great paving stones together and attached them to a length of rope such as sailors always carry bound around their waists. The loose end of this rope he was about to attach to the head of the horse when the Count called him sharply to desist.

"My good fellow," he said, "avast there! Have you, then, been so long a sailor and failed to notice that anchors are

never attached to the stern of the ship? Attach it to the bow!"

Blushing, even so that the red blood showed under his tan, Penelon passed to the bow of the craft and spliced the rope firmly into the hair of the Hungarian palfrey's tail, as only sailors know how to splice. The Count then put the three paving stones in his lap and felt more at ease, knowing that, in case of danger, it would be only necessary to cast the anchor overboard.

All that day the good Hungarian craft proceeded calmly, with Penelon at the side, the weather being fair, with light westerly winds, giving hope of a good passage, but the Count was a little uneasy, knowing it was the time of the mistral, that hurricane-like tempest. That night they put up at a little auberge near the town of Salon. As they entered the inn yard the aubergist ran forward to meet them, but stopped short.

"Pardon, messieurs," he said, "but are you going or coming?"

"I am coming," said Monte Cristo, calmly, sawing on the tiller ropes, as the Hungarian palfrey backed into the yard,

and then, with a sigh of relief, he cast the anchor overboard and disembarked.

"Penelon," he said next morning, as he prepared to embark, "I do not like the smell of the air. I fear we shall have heavy weather to-day. Look well to all the rigging, test the tiller ropes, examine the anchor splice, and make sure that the engine is in running order. And, above all, see that the furnace has been well stoked."

"Hay, oats, and corn have been put in in plenty, monsieur," said the aubergist.

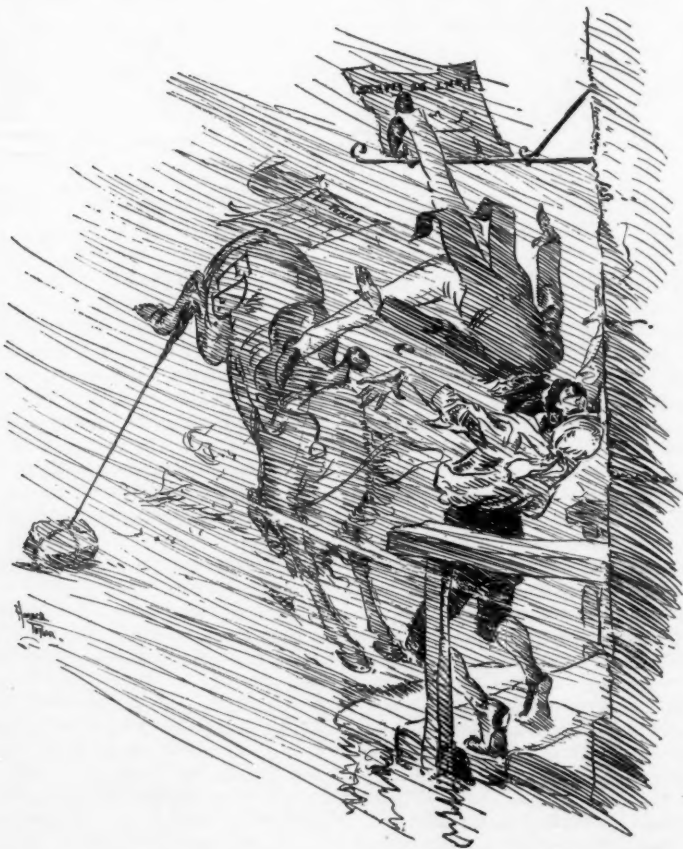
"And everything else is shipshape," said Penelon.

"Then I will go aboard at once," said

Monte Cristo, and amidst cries of "*Bon voyage*" and "*Pour boire, s'il vous plait*," he boarded the craft, just as the first breath of the mistral swept the straw of the inn yard rustling into one corner.

At the Auberge of Pont du Garde the villain Caderousse was standing in his inn door, hoping some poor traveler might pass that way whom he might fleece, when the mistral broke in all its fury, and he stepped inside, that he might be out of the thick of the storm, but still hear any approaching traveler.

At the auberge near Salon Monte Cristo had just mounted his Hungarian palfrey



"One!"

when the mistral broke upon him, but amidst all its noise the aubergist managed to make himself heard.

"None of my business," he shouted, "but it is customary to ride other end to. Nothing to me, but if I were going anywhere in a storm like this I would drive the horse head-end forward, and not try to back it all the way. Just as you like, but I would not sit facing the rear of the horse."

A flush, as of quick anger, spread over the face of Monte Cristo, but he hid it with a careless cough.

"Excuse me," he said lightly, "I'm so absent minded! You should have called my attention to it, Penelon."

"I was about to do so, master," said the good fellow.

Without another word Monte Cristo righted himself, and all might have yet been well, had not several old copies of the *Temps* rustled down the inn yard like the first white-capped waves of a storm at sea. The Hungarian palfrey craft seemed to go upon her beam ends, and then, as one of the white-cap *Temps* struck her full astern, she dashed madly forward. Monte Cristo grasped the flying mane with one hand, while with the other he held the anchor in an involuntary clasp. The tiller ropes flew wild, nor did he seek to gain them, for he knew there was no use to attempt it in such a storm as now broke upon him. Lightning flashed, the rain poured down, and the Hungarian palfrey, driven full before the wind, rose and fell mountain high. And each time Monte Cristo rose a little higher than the palfrey. The three paving stones in his lap helped him to come down again.

"And this," he muttered, "is the horse Penelon got when I told him to get a tame old nag that any old woman could ride! Why, the horse is a demon!"

In truth, at each fall of Monte Cristo, the horse sprang forward more swiftly, as if spurred on, and at each fall Monte Cristo groaned, for the terrific wind, full astern, blew his coat tails forward, and he fell sitting on the six or seven hundred diamonds. Spurs could have done no more. Never, after that fearful ride, did Monte Cristo carry diamonds in his coat-tail pockets.

From side to side Monte Cristo looked,

seeking some soft spot where he might alight, but the road was well paved. The paving stones were hard. He saw nothing ahead but certain shipwreck, and he hoped the craft might spring a leak and sink peacefully ere it dashed itself to pieces on some rocky coast. He hoped the engine would break, or the furnace run out of fuel. He hoped his coat-tail pocket would split open and spill out the diamonds.

Never, in all his voyages, had he had such a tumultuous trip. Never, in the dungeon of the Château d'If had he felt nearer death. He cursed the impulse that had made him get aboard of a craft that had neither life preservers nor life boats.

Suddenly he saw ahead of him what, in Languedoc, is called a garden, in which was set a wayside inn, and, creaking in the hurricane, he saw the inn sign—a sheet of tin covered with a caricature resemblance of the Pont du Garde. In a few more bounces he would be there! But would the Hungarian palfrey stop? Instinct told him that the Hungarian palfrey would not!

At that moment Caderousse heard the tumult of the approaching craft and the wild yells of Monte Cristo, and rushed from his inn door to persuade, if possible, the traveler to stop the night with him. One glance told Monte Cristo this was his old-time enemy, and that this was the end of his journey, if his palfrey only thought so.

"Ha!" cried Monte Cristo. He had suddenly remembered his anchor. With one swift turn of his wrist he cast the heavy paving stones into the road.

The effect was instantaneous. The paving stones stopped. The Hungarian palfrey craft stopped. But Monte Cristo did not stop. True and straight as an arrow from the bow he shot over the head of the Hungarian palfrey; true and straight to where Caderousse stood, and as he flew, diamond-loaded coat tails first, at the astonished aubergist, Caderousse had barely time to gasp:

"Edmond Dantes!"

Then, with a dull grunt, Caderousse, struck square in the chest by Monte Cristo's full weight, fell back dead.

"One!" said the Count mysteriously, his eyes fixed on the corpse, disfigured by so awful a death.

# THE STAR OF LOVE

BY FLORENCE MORSE KINGSLEY

*Author of "Titus," etc.*

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE KEEPER OF THE KING'S SEAL



MORDECAI, keeper of the king's seal, whose office at court obliged him to await daily the imperial orders in the King's Gate, as the great anteroom of the Hall of Columns was called, sat in his accustomed place, occupied busily with the manifold duties which his position imposed.

As he impressed the signet in the soft wax that sealed a great parchment roll his mind again reverted to the circumstance which had puzzled him at the time; namely, the unchallenged ingress and egress of Nathan to the presence of the queen elect. He lifted his eyes from his task to see the subject of his meditations standing before him.

"You are welcome, son of Asa," Mordecai greeted him gravely. "But why are you here, whose duties keep you ever near the person of the monarch?"

"I am here in the pursuance of those duties, Matacas. The king desires your presence and attendance upon him two hours after midday, in the garden of the fountains. He would make safe provision for—the queen, his wife, in case sudden death or disaster overtake him. To no other will he submit these matters save to you."

The young man bowed his head, while a deep flush overspread his face.

"I—would also speak with you, Mordecai, on my own behalf," he went on. "I think I was mad that day in the king's garden. I could not bear the thought of

what I supposed to be true. I did not believe that the king meant to marry her; and so I was—mad, and in my madness I know not what wild words I may have uttered. She—has passed from my life now, and like the star I named her is set high above my poor head in resplendent beauty. I may never again hope to speak with her face to face; but this I would say, if I might: *Forgive me!* Speak this word for me, Mordecai, as you have opportunity."

"I do not look to have audience with the queen's majesty," Mordecai said coldly. "And should so great an honor be vouchsafed me, it would be indiscreet to allude to the past. You understand me, I trust."

"That she is forever lost to me, I understand; but I may yet adore her—my Star, whose effulgence cannot be hidden; and if the time ever comes when I can serve her with my sword or with my life, both are hers."

"So ever speaks the loyal subject," said Mordecai, yet more coldly; "but I trust the queen will not soon have need of your willing service."

He looked keenly into the face of the soldier, observing his handsome features and glowing eyes with critical attention.

"I have somewhat more to say to you, Prince of Edom," he said slowly. "Not many days since, you gained access to the presence of majesty in a manner unknown to me. I questioned the guards stationed at the door, and they told me they had been ordered by the king himself to admit the man bearing the king's signet. How then came you there?"

"I bore the king's signet—and was admitted, even according to the king's word."

"You are lying."

The royal guardsman laid his hand upon

his sword, while his face slowly blanched to the color of clay.

"You forget to whom you speak, Benjamite," he said, the hot blood of the warrior David blazing up in his dark eyes. "Observe this seal, if you will. See, it bears the image of the king and his superscription. It was given to me by one of the Achamenidae."

"I—did forget, strangely, prince. I remembered only that you had reason to—distrust me and my motives."

"I have indeed reason to distrust them and you. Thrice have you played me false; and how may I repose any further confidence in you? I believe you to be a man of insatiable ambition. To that ambition you would have sacrificed her, her life, her love; as for the last descendant of your king, he is no better than a base-born slave in your eyes. If I have not altogether hated and despised you, Mordecai, it is because a softer feeling has prevailed. For her sake I will not slay you; for her sake I will even try not to hate you."

"You have altogether mistaken me, Nathan. Listen, and mark well what I say. Our captive race is hopelessly scattered throughout all the provinces; and while we are many, yet is our power weak. We have no leaders, no statesmen, no prophets. The hand of Jehovah lies heavy upon us. True, the king of Persia finds us convenient to him in many capacities, and so uses us as a man will use a tool fitted to his hand. But many of our merchants in the maritime towns have grown rich, and in the cities others have gained for themselves houses and lands, so that the eyes of the conqueror begin to rest upon us enviously. There has been a disastrous war; the people are impoverished; what shall hinder them from plucking this hardly gained wealth from the hand of defenseless captives? Moreover, there are those high in favor with the king who hate as well as envy us. An edict against the Hebrews—if perchance the king's ear be gained by those who would profit thereby—would be easily said. I know whereof I speak who have lived more than a score of years in the Persian court."

"Granted that all this be true—though I perceive nothing of it in the army, where such piracy has its rise if anywhere—what may she do to prevent it?"

"She may—Jehovah helping her—do everything. She is near the king—nearer now than any other. She has become the guardian angel of fallen Israel. Pray for her, prince; pray also for thy captive brethren, and forget the small personal disappointment that has been meted out to you. Go now. It were not well that we were even seen talking together. Go; but do not forget what I have said."

Close upon the heels of the royal guardsman came a eunuch wearing the rich liveries of the deposed queen. His royal mistress, said this functionary, demanded at once the attendance of Matabas, keeper of the seals. And when Matabas demurred thereat, making plea of his official business, the eunuch showed a scroll writ by the hand of a slave skilled in writing and sealed with the queen's signet.

"'Tis a matter of life and death," read the scroll, "therefore obey without question."

He went and found the former wife of Xerxes was not weeping, for once; nor had she eaten or slept since the visit of Meres the day before. She was not even reclining upon one of the great divans heaped with cushions, but walking up and down in disordered fashion, her hands clenched, her eyes fixed and glassy.

"What of the king?" she whispered, approaching her white face close to that of Matabas, and fixing him with her haggard eyes. "Does he yet live? I asked my slaves; but no one could tell me certainly of Xerxes."

The Hebrew, thinking the unfortunate queen had lost, by reason of her misfortunes, what little wit she once possessed, spoke soothingly to her. The king, he assured her, was in excellent health.

"You have seen him?"

"Not this morning; but I am under command to appear before him to-day. He is in health else I should not be summoned."

Amestris heaved a great breath, as if relieved of some intolerable burden.

"I—I fancied him—dead," she murmured. "Dead—in his bed—murdered! All night I have seen him lying cold and ghastly beneath the golden vine of Samos with its jeweled clusters. But he still lives—lives! The Ahuras guarded him, and shall guard him. But I—even I will avert the sword from his breast!"



Matacas felt a great pity for the unfortunate queen, whom he conceived as removed from her place to make room for his own kinswoman by a power more absolute than that of Auramazda, God of the Persians. He spoke to her with a voice of gentle authority, bidding her cease her weeping and compose herself.

"I will call the women in attendance and one of the physicians of the king to fetch such medicines and restoratives as may be useful to the queen," he said, meaning to make his escape from so unprofitable an occupation as listening to the ravings of one demented; when Amestris caught him by the sleeve.

"Stop!" she ordered. "You have much to do. There is a plot on foot to assassinate the king. The eunuch Teresh is sworn to kill him at night in his bed. I consented, because they will make my son king in the place of his father, and because I hate the woman who has stolen my place. But I cannot—after all—I cannot let them do it! I—love him too much—even yet; and to think of him as dead! Let them kill *her*, if they will; but—I—cannot——"

Her voice trailed off into silence, though her dry lips still formed words of terrible import.

Matacas, convinced now that a frightful crime had been contemplated, questioned the queen skillfully; and in the end elicited from her unwilling lips the main features of her interview with Meres. When he had learned the name of the man chiefly implicated he at once understood what had happened, and trembled to think of the web of intrigue and hatred which was weaving about the beautiful Esther, his kinswoman.

"The Egyptian will kill me, if he finds that I have betrayed him," whispered the wretched queen; "but what could I do? I saw nothing but Xerxes—dead, and the sight maddened me! I care not if my son be king. Let the king name whom he will to the succession. And Xerxes will count me guilty if he hears that I listened to the Egyptian. He will cause me to be put to death, even if I survive the anger of Meres. And I—I—am afraid. To be strangled—to be crucified—as I have seen malefactors—how could I bear it?"

Matacas was deep in thought, his head bent, his hand playing with the strands of his silver beard. The half-insane utter-

ances of the unhappy queen buzzed about his ears like a swarm of gnats. He raised his hand at length, commanding silence.

"Listen," he said. "It must not be known that you have told me this. I will frustrate these bold designs, as if I alone had uncovered them. I will save the king."

"Dear, good Matacas!" sobbed the woman. "I sent for you because I knew that of all men you were most to be trusted in Shushan. Then I may remain in peace, knowing that you will not betray me?"

"It rests with you whether or no it shall be published that the mother of the king's sons was guilty of plotting against the king's life," Matacas said, with exceeding sternness. "There will be many other conspiracies called into being by those envious persons who hate the king, or"—his voice became menacing—"the newly crowned queen of Persia. You will be approached by such malcontents because you have been divorced from the king, and because you possess great wealth and a certain prestige remaining to you from your former glory. This I will assure you, and this you must engrave upon the tablets of undying memory: Perform, sanction or encourage any injury to the young queen of Persia and I shall at once lay bare your infamy. Death by strangulation or crucifixion were too kind a punishment for a regicide who has been wife of the king and is still mother of his children."

"You—you terrify me!"

"I would terrify you, woman, into such silence and peaceful intent as shall hereafter forever prevent all possible dangers of the sort. Another time you might not repent and reveal your guilty conspiracies. Swear to me by Auramazda, whom you believe to be the holy and all-wise God, that you will henceforth protect the king's life by every means in your power."

"I swear it, gladly, by Auramazda and all lesser deities!"

"Swear to me by Auramazda, the only true God, one with Elohim, who is maker of heaven and earth and all that in them is, that you will not injure, nor cause to be injured, the queen of Persia, who is called Esther. Quick, woman—or I call the guards to bind you!"

"I—swear—it!"

Matacas, keeper of the royal seals, went out from the presence of the erstwhile queen, confident that he had cut off wholly and for all time one possible avenue of danger to his beloved kinswoman. He related to the king such details of the plot as seemed wise, without implicating either Amestris or the Egyptian satrap. The eunuch Teresh, together with a fellow-servant, was crucified that same day; for they were caught with weapons in the very bed-chamber of the king, concealed behind the gold-embroidered arras of his bed. And while the bodies of the malefactors still writhed on their crosses, a proposal of marriage for his daughter, in behalf of the king's oldest son, Darius, was laid before Meres, Prince of Thebes.

And thus the whole occurrence was written by the king's scribes in the book of the Chronicles of the King. And there it remained. No reward was meted out to Matacas, keeper of the seals, because he had saved the king's life; but he was well content, because Jehovah had prospered the matter in his hand, and because the queen, who was called Esther, lived in peace in the king's house.

## CHAPTER XIV

### IN THE HOUSE OF HAMAN

IN the garden of the great house of Haman, on an autumn morning, when the deciduous trees and shrubs were beginning to shed their leaves, the handsome and haughty mistress of the domain was berating her servants with a tongue wherein dwelt not the law of kindness. The garden walks had not been properly swept, she declared, and forthwith ordered the gardener to be scourged, albeit every passing breeze brought showers of yellowed leaves to the ground. The marble steps and porticoes failed to show the high finish deemed requisite to their beauty, and the keen black eyes which inspected the labors of the slaves who had been engaged in polishing them kindled into impatient fury.

"Laggards and gluttons all!" she cried, "you shall have no food till sunset; then if all is not to my liking you shall also go under the lash."

The lady, gathering her rich robes in one

jeweled hand, passed from the inspection of her terraces and gardens into the house, where she finally emptied the overflowing vials of her wrath upon the defenseless heads of certain maids and tire-women who were engaged in fashioning embroidered stuffs and tissues into a variety of garments for the lady's future requirements. Other workwomen suffered at her imperious hands in varying degrees, and all were reduced to trembling silence, before the great lady, wearied with her repeated outbursts of anger, finally passed into her inner apartments, presumably there to recline upon a cushioned divan and recuperate her exhausted energies.

She had not, however, had time to sink into the tranquil slumbers which were wont to follow the morning rounds of her palace, when she was disturbed by the hasty and unannounced entrance of a man, splendidly dressed, but quite evidently in a bad temper.

"Always sleeping, like a cat in the sun!" he cried, angrily staring at the relaxed figure on the divan. "At what hour shall I find you awake and ready to receive me, madame?"

The woman lifted her short upper lip in a stifled yawn, while she surveyed the man from under haughtily lowered eyelids.

"My lord is somewhat—shall I call it abrupt?—with his devoted wife," she observed, in a low, carefully modulated voice. "What, then, has occurred to vex my lord?"

"Everything, and nothing—that you can remedy, Zarara," the man answered, throwing himself into a carved chair, over which hung a superb leopard skin. "I am required at once to pluck the moon from the sky—for a woman; and I am in sorry plight, who have no ladder long enough to reach it."

The dark eyes of Zarara sparkled.

"What woman demands this of you?" she asked; "perchance your wife may find the ladder—or silence the request."

The man's coarse features relaxed into a doubtful smile. He leaned forward and fingered the woman's white shoulder, as one would caress a favorite animal.

"You are not lacking in a certain shrewdness, my Zarara," he said loftily, "but—well; I will tell you my case. It is, after all, a matter requiring a woman's

sly wit, rather than a statesman's acute powers."

He broadened his shoulders and frowned majestically, while the woman smothered a laugh of scorn in her mantle.

"You have seen our newly crowned queen," he went on with a gesture of impatience. "Of what nationality is she, think you?"

"She is a Hebrew," Zarara answered unhesitatingly.

"Surely not," disagreed her husband. "She bears a Persian name—Esther."

"So also do you, Haman, son of Hammedatha; but you are, nevertheless, of the royal blood of the Amalekite kings. The queen is a Hebrew; I am sure of it. Shall I tell you why?"

"Aye; tell me."

"'Tis not only the fashion of her countenance—and that clearly bespeaks her origin to the attentive eye; but—she prays to the God of the Hebrews and to no other."

"Who said it?"

Zarara smiled arrogantly. "'Twas learned by exercise of a woman's sly wit, as you are pleased to call my distinguished prudence and discretion in conducting the affairs of your household. Perhaps if it were not for my despised wisdom the son of Hammedatha would not now be chief of all the counselors of Xerxes. I am always sleeping, it is true, like a cat in the sun. But Bast, the cat-headed goddess, worshiped and revered by the Egyptians, also sleeps; but always with a listening ear. So sleep I."

"And what heard you in your dreams, bright goddess of my heart and fortunes?" entreated her husband, aware that only through flattery could he obtain the coveted information his consort was withholding from him with a teasing glimmer of bright eyes under half-closed lids. Zarara was not unlike the sleek, sinuous, treacherous animal to which she had compared herself, and Haman respected her almost superhuman acumen, while he affected to vastly despise her feminine methods of gathering information.

"Yesterday I slept soundly at the hour of noon, most valiant and honored of lords," replied Zarara, with a mocking inclination of her small dark head, "and so, being asleep—but with the open ear of Bast—I

heard my slaves and tire-women talking amongst themselves. These base creatures of our underworld have ears; eyes also have they, and feet shod with silence. Often they perceive things that we from our superior eminence have overlooked."

"Do not weary me, woman, with vain babblings. I am in haste," quoth the man, plucking at his elaborately curled and scented beard. "Tell me at once what you heard."

"Go, then—in what haste you will. You disturb me. I would again sleep." And the woman flung herself back among her cushions with an affected air of great weariness.

"I will depart, woman; but I may not return, since I have had the dire misfortune to offend Atossa, worshipful mother of the king."

Zarara's dark eyes flew wide.

"She is an old Harpie—that woman; a true cat of Bubastes, if you will. How came Atossa to set her claws in you, foolish one?"

"She sent for me on the day of the crowning of our queen—may she live forever; since such, it would appear, is the gracious pleasure of the king—and, having closeted herself with me, the daughter of Cyrus propounded divers hard questions; to be left unanswered at my peril."

He bent forward and whispered certain words in the woman's attentive ear.

"How could she have discovered your secret after you had put to death the one man who was aware of it?" Zarara demanded sharply. "You must have babbled it while drinking over much wine at a banquet, and Atossa's spies are everywhere! Many times I have warned you!"

"You—warned me!" sneered the man. "You entertain me with the brilliant movements of your intellect, Zarara. I cannot tell you how the most puissant of queens came upon the unfortunate episode at Ecbatana; but it matters little, save that she has promised me upon her royal honor to make all known to the king, in case I fail to furnish answers to her several questions. This I cannot do; and to-morrow, she assures me—not later, she will explain all my doings in the city of which I have spoken; and further make deposition of other matters which I considered deep buried in the past, but which have now

risen from their tomb to haunt me with their dire faces."

"What does the old queen require you to find out?" asked Zarara, drawing her delicate brows together.

"She requires of me full information relating to Esther—the king's wife. Of what nationality is she? From whence did she come? Who was her father? who her mother? To no one in the court are these things known, and Atossa desires to be acquainted with them."

"To what end?"

"That she may destroy the woman, I suppose. It is known that she wishes to place Artisonna on the throne. More than that, as you well know, the revered mother of Xerxes is never so happy as when engaged in terrifying or destroying some one. And where so tempting a quarry as this strange queen, who came out of the darkness, borne by tongueless slaves, and who has conquered Xerxes himself by her surpassing beauty?"

The attentive Zarara pursed her scarlet lips disdainfully.

"I cannot see it," she said angrily.

"What? the answers to the questions put forth by Atossa? Assuredly not. Did I not tell you that I am already a ruined man?"

The woman burst into a light rippling laugh of scorn. "You amuse me," she said, "with the simplicity of your ideas. If you were in reality a ruined man should I, think you, recline here supine among my cushions? My fate is linked to yours whether I will or no; and so you shall not at present be ruined by a lack of information with which to regale the withered ears of the old queen. A rich feast I promise her."

"Lies will not answer in this case, woman, however skillfully you may compose them."

"A lie could be fashioned which would satisfy even Atossa, the mother of lies, son of Hammedatha; nevertheless, the naked truth unadorned by the least falsehood will amply suffice on this occasion."

"Tell me what you know—quick. I must return to the palace at once."

"Go in peace, my lord. I shall have all needful information prepared when you return to me at sunset. At present I intend to withhold it."

Haman got to his feet slowly. "That accursed Hebrew who sits in the King's Gate daily affronts me, in spite of the threats of my servants. It was you who counseled that course. How may I feel any confidence in your promises this time?"

Zarara had also arisen, and now she flung her delicate arms about her husband's huge neck and looked up into his face, her own all aglow with delighted mischief.

"What would you say, great lord of mine, if I should whisper to you that here in this house of ours, I have the talisman which shall abase the proud head of Matacas to the very dust before you?"

"Do this, Zarara, and I am truly your slave!"

"Nay; but you are already my slave. A score of times you have sworn it. Once, when my woman's wit saved you at Ecbatana; again, when you would have lost all that you possessed in a single venture on that unlucky merchant of Shiraz; and a third time——"

The man closed the scarlet lips with a quick pressure of his own.

"Spare me, Zarara," he entreated, "the recital of my various follies. I acknowledge my vast indebtedness to you; but I also have done somewhat on my own account. Am I not the richest man in all the kingdom? Do I not count my darics by myriads, and my slaves, horses, chariots, and estates by hundreds? And am not I the chief of all the counselors of Xerxes?"

"You are all, and more than all that you have said, great Haman," cried the woman, "and because you are great in mind, body and estate I—who would hate and scorn a meaner man—love and adore you utterly. And so you need not fear to trust me; only do not speak of ruin, defeat or loss. The words cause a shudder of fear to pass through all my inmost being; for this much I have discovered: there can be no lasting prosperity where fear dwells."

"Tell me straightway of your talisman which shall humble the Hebrew, Matacas—for truly the man poisons all pleasure in my greatness. He corrupts my servants, also, by his persistent refusal to do me lawful homage. I cannot longer endure it."

"Nor shall you be forced to do so, dear lord. Only be patient till I can tell you all that I would—at sunset you shall not

find me sleeping; but instead a banquet of the most exquisite foods spread for the two of us alone—I will send and put off those stupid persons who look to eat at our expense to-day. To-night—to-night, sweet lord, I will tell you all!”

When a second time the lady Zarara passed through the chamber wherein sat the company of women who wrought embroideries, and who sewed skillfully with the needle, she smiled sweetly and praised all that had been done. Also she bade one of the women to come to her in her chamber that she might try the effect of a certain tunic with a sleeved coat of a new Babylonian fashion.

The woman in question was dark and old, and much overburdened with flesh; she spoke the Persian tongue, moreover, with a strange, foreign accent, which caused the younger maids to laugh and jeer over their needlework. But she possessed great skill in certain fine embroideries, and none knew better than she how to arrange the folds of a sleeve or the fit of a robe about the neck and chest.

The lady Zarara was most gracious to the foreign woman that day; her voice was sweet and low, and not once did she speak harshly, though the sleeved coat of Babylonian stuff did not at all harmonize with the tunic and robe designed to accompany it.

“Many things do not harmonize in this sad world, alas!” philosophized Zarara plaintively; “and many bitter changes befall persons as well as garments. Now I perceive from your superior knowledge of many things that not always have you served in a menial position. You have once been rich; is it not so?”

The woman heaved a deep sigh, which caused her large figure to quiver like a mold of jelly. “I was not rich,” she replied, “but—it is true that I occupied a far different position in life. I once lived in the house of one where I was mistress alone, and where I had full liberty to do as I would.”

“But a change came. Alas! so it is with all of us. You are not a native of this country, I perceive, by the exact and careful manner in which you speak the Persian tongue. You are—may I guess—a Hebrew?”

The woman cast down her eyes, but

the astute Zarara perceived that her fingers trembled.

“We also—my husband and I—were of a captive race,” murmured the lady sweetly. “But we have prospered notwithstanding. And so likewise has your Jehovah greatly prospered your afflicted race. That the queen is a Hebrew cannot fail to be of great moment to you.”

“The queen—a Hebrew? Who—said it?” stammered the woman, her tongue thick with amazement.

“Why, indeed, everyone knows it,” smiled the lady Zarara. “How else could she be so distinguished in her beauty, so elegant in her person? No other women compare with the women of the Hebrews in their first youth. Now the queen, I should venture to say, is scarcely twenty years old.”

“You are right, madame; she is but eighteen.”

“Ah, you knew her, then, before she became the queen of Xerxes?”

“I did not say so, I—but—”

“Ah! do not be afraid to speak freely to me; and why deny what may be of signal advantage to you? You once served the young queen, perchance? Nay, if it were so, I might easily arrange to have you restored to her service. I am told that she is displeased with her chief tire-woman, and why should not you hold the position, who are skilled above most in all matters of the toilet?”

“Why, indeed?” echoed the woman, her large, dark face reddening with sudden anger. “She loved me best of all her women, and with reason, since I—”

“You had been long with her, perchance, and so earned her confidence?”

“I brought her up—even as a nurse and mother; and you may well say I served and loved her from the beginning. But—there, I babble; as I have been forbidden. It is true that love and anger unbind even the tongue of the wise; and even yet I cannot abide the memory of my dismissal without a burning resentment.”

“Unfortunate woman!” sighed Zarara, “I sympathize with you deeply. I know well what it is to be separated from those we love. How beats the heart, slow and heavily; and there is a strange burning pain—ah! how often have I experienced it! but tell me more—tell me all! I can help



you, my good woman; my position at court is not without its advantage, and my heart is ever warm, though my tongue is often sharp."

"I fear you could do nothing for me, kind lady, though my mistress, I know, has often wept for me. No one could soothe and please her as I could. No other was permitted to attend her in her bath. She could not have known that I was not to accompany her to the king's house; and often I have wondered how she fared without me. Twice have I made bold efforts to see her; but each time the guards have refused me admittance. If the gracious lady of Haman could indeed bring it to pass that I might once kiss the hem of her garment I should be ready to serve her always."

"I can easily arrange it, my poor woman," Zarara assured her compassionately; "but tell me, what do they call you?—so that I may speak to the queen."

"My name is Abihail," said the woman, after a visible struggle with herself. "She will know, and I care not who else knows it," she added boldly. "Jehovah be my witness that Mordecai did me a foul wrong!"

"Mordecai?—ah, yes, you mean, of course, the Hebrew, who——"

"They call him by another name in the palace," grumbled the old woman. "But it was he who caused me to be taken from my child. He feared lest I should betray the queen's nationality. But you tell me that everyone in the palace knows that she is a Hebrew. There can, therefore, be no further reason for Mordecai's excessive caution. He was ever fond of hiding all that concerned him under a cloak of secrecy. But when it comes to hiding a great queen, his mantle is too narrow, say I!" And she cackled merrily, as if well pleased with her wit.

"You are quite in the right, my excellent Abihail; but while I and others high in position know right well of the queen's relationship to this Mordecai, you should not on that account——"

"I said not that she was of kin to him," interrupted the woman, rudely, her mirth suddenly subsiding into sullen reserve.

"But I am right, nevertheless? Of course everyone had guessed it from his excessive devotion to the queen's inter-

ests. It is what we at court call an open secret."

"He told me that no one knew of it in the palace; that he would suffer quite as much as I, should it be spoken of."

"He told you that? Ah, my poor Abihail, even the best of men are oftentimes most selfish, and—shall I say it?—deceitful. They care not how we suffer—we whose hearts are tender and loving, whose very lives are bound up with those we love. But Mordecai should not have told you that no one at court knew of his kinship to the queen. Just what that kinship is I have often amused myself by guessing. She is his daughter, I have said to myself.—No? His niece, then; since he is so much her senior. What? they are children of brothers, say you?"

The old woman nodded her head wisely.

"I will tell you," she said, "since you already know so much. The mother of Hadassah was a princess of the line of Judah, whose king, Jeconiah, was carried captive to Babylon in the old days; and her father's brother was Jair, the father of Mordecai. Now you have the whole matter."

"Ah, I see it clearly now. How full of interest, and how sweet the devotion of kinship! Then you are not, as I fancied, mother of the queen—excellent Abihail?"

"I—mother of Hadassah? Nay, I was only her nurse. But I loved her even as a mother, and as a mother, also, I have bewailed her loss these many months."

"Poor, poor Abihail!" murmured Zarara, with exceeding sweetness. "I shall not forget what you have confided to me. But it shall be between me and thee alone, shall it not? For, believe me, it is not wise nor prudent to speak of those high in position too freely. Indeed you must promise me that you will not tell any other what you have just told me?"

Abihail trembled. "I—I fear I ought not to have spoken of these matters," she faltered. "Mordecai will be very angry with me, if he discovers that I—that you——"

"Mordecai shall never know of it, dear, good, tender-hearted Abihail, and I shall at once endeavor to obtain an audience for you with the queen. I shall succeed, I am sure. But tell me one thing more before we part; the excellent He-

brew, Mordecai, who is of kin to the queen, where is he employed in the palace? I would know this that I may not blunder with my tongue when I speak with our beautiful and beloved queen concerning these matters which will be of such close interest to her."

The woman pursed up her withered lips.

"Mordecai is a wise man—in his own eyes," she said garrulously. "And he imagines himself high in favor with Jehovah as well as with the king of Persia. He goes every day to the hall which is called the King's Gate, where he sits for many hours merely pressing the signet of Xerxes into soft wax. I could do as much."

A jubilant light leaped up in Zarara's eyes.

"Can it be believed that a near kinsman of the queen is content to be a scribe and a sealer of parchments?" she exclaimed softly. "Nay, the gods must have a more exalted position in store for him. As for you, my good Abihail, the king will doubtless delight to give you anything you require—if, as you say, the queen loves you. And let me, as the queen's friend, advance an insignificant portion of that which rightfully belongs to you." And she pressed a purse of gold into the old woman's hand.

"Remember," she said, at parting, "this is our secret, good Abihail: tell no other what you have confided to me!"

When the old Hebrew woman departed at sunset from the palace of Haman by a mean door leading to the street, she was not aware of a dark figure which followed her quite to the house of Mordecai, near the south gate of the city.

To this house she had returned at the stern bidding of the scribe; but from it after many weeks a great discontent had driven her forth to find such employment as should bring her nearer to the person of her beloved mistress.

In the house of Haman she had found all that she sought, and much more, she was thinking, as she let herself in from the street and shut and fast locked the heavy door behind her. The man, who had followed her thus far, stood for a moment staring at the house. Then he wrapped his face in his mantle and stole quietly away down the shadowy street.

## CHAPTER XV

### A DARK SAYING

THE powerful and magnificent Haman, highest of all the subjects of the crown and most highly esteemed of the Counselors of Xerxes, was dining quite alone with his wife Zarara. Other wives had Haman; but these, being inferior both in beauty and intellect, were lodged in a meaner dwelling quite out of sight and hearing of the haughty daughter of Dalphon. And of his ten sons and four daughters not one was present. Zarara had sent them summarily away that she might converse in strict privacy with her husband.

The man drained his small goblet of Sidonian crystal at a draught and set it down with a harsh laugh.

"What call you these toys?" he asked, fingering his cup contemptuously. "They are fit only for women and children. Cause my great cup to be fetched."

"Alas! my lord's great cup has gone to the goldsmith's to be repaired," Zarara answered smoothly. "But let us now speak further of the matter whereof I have informed you. Do not, I entreat of my lord, join with Queen Atossa in any attempt upon the woman who is called Esther. It will be useless, and only disaster can come of it."

Her voice was low and pleading, and she fixed her eyes anxiously upon the handsome, cruel face of the man.

"I swear that of all women you most resemble Astarte, whom the Egyptians also call Bast," he answered. "Yet even the superior gods are said to nod upon occasions, and so, we may suppose, do the goddesses. Your sagacity, my Zarara, is for once at fault. I shall tell Atossa all, and together we will destroy the whole brood of crawling vermin. So will the greater include the lesser revenge, and I shall yet witness the crucifixion of the impudent scribe, who not only refuses to prostrate himself before me but has also dared to make a scurvy jest of the Queen Mother, the court, and the king himself, by means of this common Jewish woman—this slave girl, who calls herself Esther—whom he has contrived to elevate to the throne."

"But I have told you that the queen is not of the baser Hebrew stock," persisted

Zarara. "The woman Abihail declared that she was of the royal line."

"A royal Hebrew? nay; what is a royal Hebrew? One may find many such laboring in the king's quarries, or scouring the pots in the king's kitchen. They are all alike—captives and slaves."

"So also are the descendants of Agag, if to be a captive is to be a slave."

"Name not Haman, the Agagite, in the same breath with the dog-faced Hebrew!" burst out the man in a black rage of anger. "I long to see him suffer—to laugh at his agonies—to spit upon his dead body!"

Zarara shivered involuntarily. Then she smiled.

"It pleases my lord to be somewhat coarse in the expression of his hatreds, as in certain of his loves," she said. "Yet I must warn you of one thing which you persist in ignoring: the king is mad with love for this Jewish woman. He will defend her as a lion defends his mate. Hate Matacas as you will; do with him as you please—even to hanging him upon a gallows fifty cubits high, where all the world may see and laugh with you; but touch not the queen."

Haman appeared lost in a black revery.

"A gallows fifty cubits high!" he muttered. "Who ever heard of or imagined such a gibbet? Nay, whether you be angel or devil, Zarara, the thoughts which visit you are not like the thoughts of other women."

"Assuredly not. But listen, my lord, I have other words to say."

"Always you have other words to say, woman; but I cannot always find time to listen."

"This time you must listen; and you will do well also to ponder upon what I shall say. No sooner has the moon reached its full brightness than for no reason that man can give, it begins to waste away; and no power either of man, god or devil can prevent its speedy return to the darkness from whence it emerged: this much have I observed."

"It pleases my lady to speak in the words of a diviner. Since when has my Zarara added sorcery and magic to the list of her many accomplishments?"

"Tis a dark saying; but it means much."

"Come, you anger me!"

"I will even expound my meaning to you, most sapient of lords. The king's majesty in this parable of mine signifies the sun."

"And I?"

"You, my lord—reflecting the glory of Mithra, the powerful—are the moon. The sun neither waxes nor wanes; but the children of men have ever observed the contrary of the orb of night."

"Then you think me waning in my powers? Does all this look like it, woman?" and he included with a wide sweep of his arm the visible wealth of his surroundings. "This very day I gained another vast accession to my estates, merely by asking for it. Xerxes will do anything I suggest. I am able to mold his will with mine, as the potter molds the clay with his fingers."

"Not always will you find the royal clay so pliable," mused Zarara thoughtfully. "Nay, my lord, it may well be that your star has reached its zenith; and while all goes well with you, yet—"

The woman paused and set her white teeth on the soft red of her under lip.

"All is well with me to-day," cried Haman boastfully; "to-morrow, also, all will be well. I declare to you, woman, that there is nothing which can prevail against me and my great power and glory!"

"Yet this very morning you called yourself a ruined man in my hearing—because Atossa had learned a secret of yours."

"I was but jesting, my Zarara; I am powerful, invincible—I tell you!"

"And I tell you that your greatness will crumble like a snow wreath—if you but touch the queen. Let Atossa attempt it if she will; but do you—beware!"

Haman burst into a great laugh of scorn.

"The queen has bewitched you with those shining eyes of hers," he said. "She is wondrous beautiful, I grant you; and Xerxes cares for nothing save her beauty in these days. He is foolishly uxorious as a newly wed shepherd, and thinks only of how he may please his wife. But the madness will presently pass. I will wait till this happens, if it please you."

Zarara shook her head. "I care nothing for the woman's eyes," she said scornfully. "To me she appears not over fair. She is too thin—too tall, and her color is indifferent. Nay, I cannot say why I am afraid to have you become the queen's

enemy; yet I know that ruin lies that way."

Haman arose abruptly from his place.

"We linger overlong in unprofitable discussion, my Zarara. I must go at once to Atossa, and tell her what I have learned."

The woman sprang after him with a stifled cry.

"Do not go—yet!" she entreated, clinging to him with both slender hands. "Stay! let me, I pray you, go to Atossa. I will deal wisely with her—as a woman may. I will say to her that you are weary—ill; that the king has sent for you—anything! Only do not go to her to-night. It frightens me to think what may happen!"

"Let me go, fool! You weary me with your arrogant assumption of wisdom. This has become a matter of statecraft, and will affect nations. Meddle no more with it; but leave all to my superior judgment."

The woman stood quite still looking after him, her eyes tortured with strange forebodings.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CASTING OF THE PUR

THE king was weary; and as had often happened in past years an unreasoning yet bitter sadness weighed upon his spirits. Lost in this dim maze of disquieting emotions he thought vaguely of his queen, and called one of his chamberlains to bid her come to him in their old trysting place in the garden. Then he frowned irritably as he perceived one of the pages attached to the royal bedchamber in the act of presenting before him a small jeweled box.

"What is this—some new unguent?" the king demanded angrily; "take it away and give it to Babires."

"May it please the king, the box contains a writing for the eye of the king alone."

Xerxes differed from his royal predecessors in many particulars, and in nothing more than in the scholarly attainments unusual to potentates of any country. He owed his almost unique accomplishment of being able to read and write to his astute mother, who was accustomed to declare that ignorance of what the scribes were writing made the scribes masters and princes their tools.

The king opened the box and found therein a tiny scroll containing a single sentence, written in the elegant characters of a skilled scribe. He read it, and his face grew darker than before.

"From whom did this writing come?" he asked.

But not one of his many attendants appeared able to answer the king's question. The frightened page, it appeared, had brought the writing at the bidding of a certain eunuch; and the eunuch, when questioned, could only say that the box was given to him by another of the grooms of the bedchamber; this man when sought for could not be found. And presently the king passed into his garden, the writing still crushed in his hand.

Hither also came Esther, the queen, after a little delay, all in a lovely flutter of haste.

She had grown more beautiful since her marriage, and the light of a supreme happiness shone in her dark eyes, and gleamed rosily about her whole stately presence, so that she appeared more a gravely beautiful goddess than a woman. And so Xerxes saw her coming to him through the ranks of late fall flowers. He did not rise to greet his queen, as was his custom, and his face looked dark and stern as the strange human heads of the great winged lions that flanked the royal house.

When Esther had approached quite near to her husband and perceived that he neither smiled nor spoke, all the proud gladness faded from her eyes; and for the first time fear of him, which the king's own hand had leashed, struggled with love. Then love conquered. She came swiftly forward and knelt at his side.

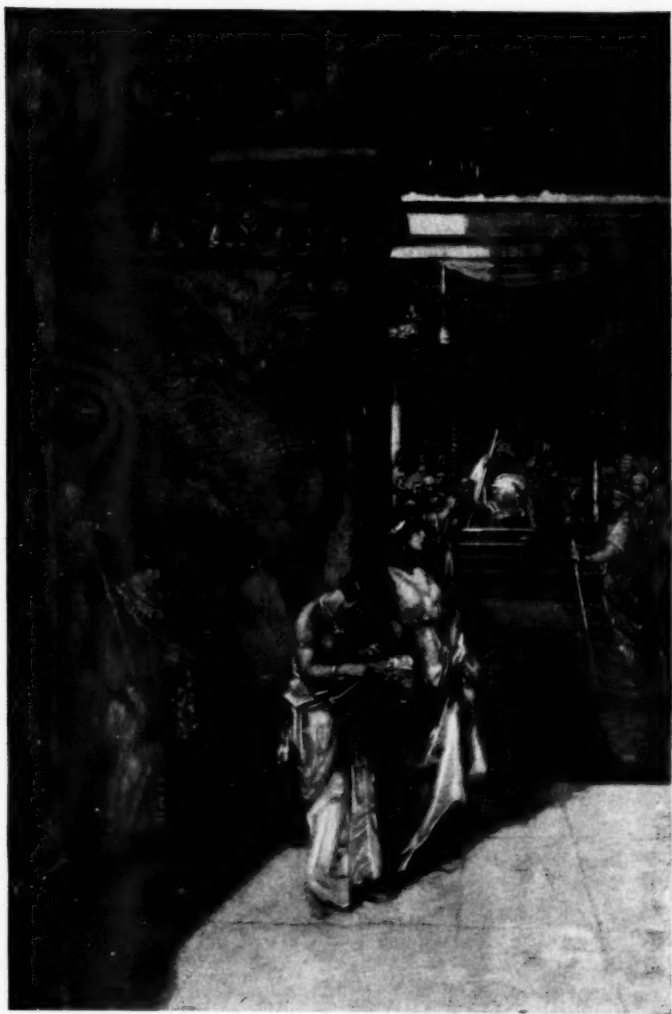
"I—have come at your bidding," she said simply, and lifted her clear sweet eyes to his with all the confidence he had himself taught her.

The gloom on the face of the king lightened and he breathed a deep sigh.

"You are fair to-day, my queen," he said, "fairer than ever. Look at me!"

He bent forward and gazed piercingly into the dark eyes, till she trembled and paled.

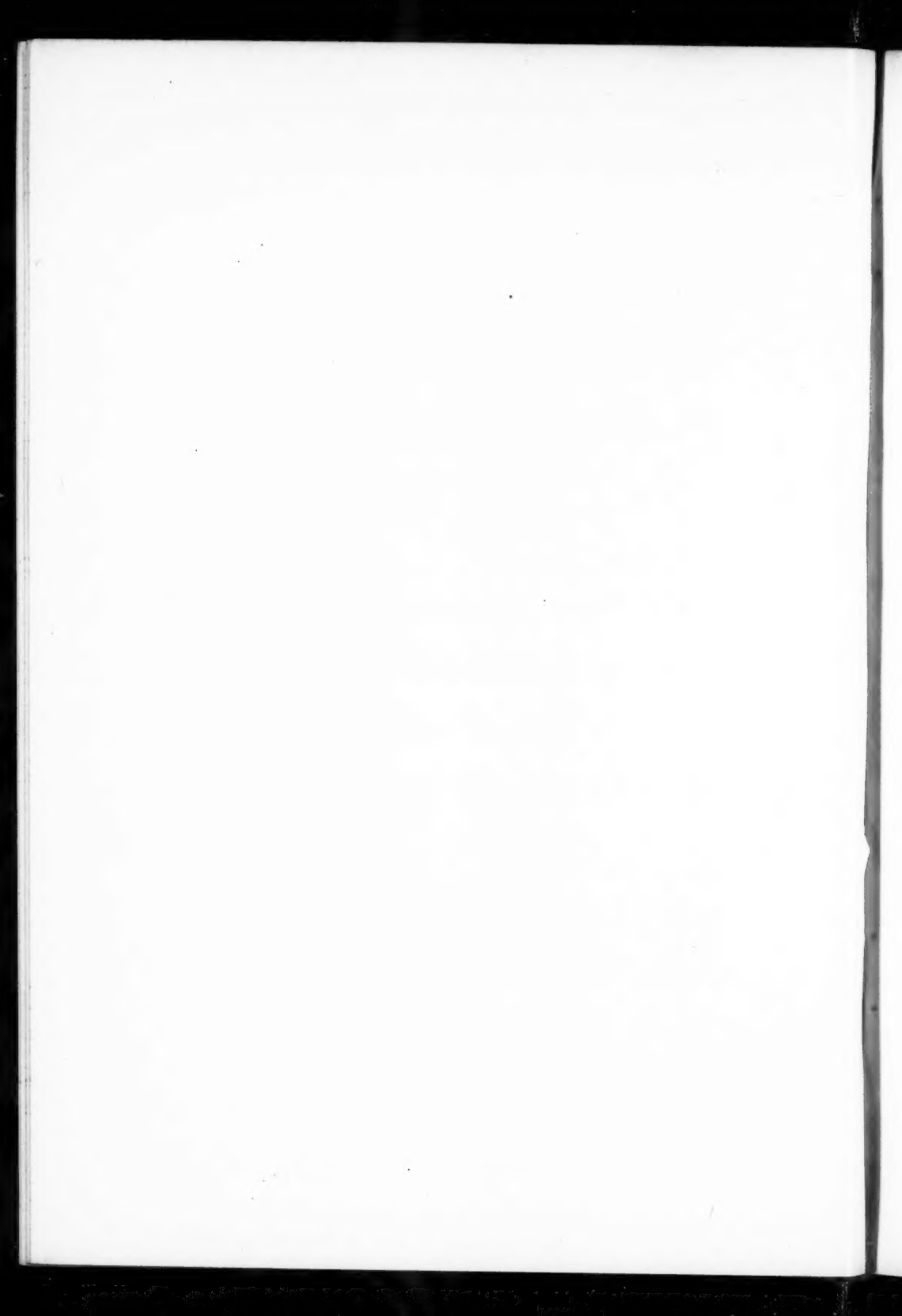
"It has not pleased—my wife to tell me many things concerning her past, which I would fain know—that all may be open and clear between us. But this one thing I must ask; and you shall answer. A man



"SHE PAUSED, A VOICELESS PRAYER TO ELOHIM RISING FROM HER WHITE LIPS."

GEORGE A. BROWN  
NEW YORK





came to you in the garden here, on the day in which I permitted you to receive the scribe, Matacas. Who was it?"

Her face quivered, as she bethought her of the terrible punishments meted out to unbidden intruders in the king's private domains, but she answered at once and with perfect truth:

"Let not the king be angry with me, nor with the Prince of Edom. He had known me in my childhood—before ever I came to the king's house, and he feared lest I——"

"He was your lover? Answer quickly!"

"He—loved me; yes."

"And you—loved—him?"

The king's look was terrible; his young wife shrank under it like a delicate flower beneath the fiery eye of the sun; but she answered steadily:

"I loved only—the king."

Xerxes arose, pushing her from him so rudely that she stumbled in her long draperies and would have fallen to the earth, but he caught and held her for an instant in a savage clasp.

"Woman, I had given my very soul into your keeping to do with as you would; if you have deceived me—lied to me— But, no; I will not listen to your protestations. No woman could face my anger and speak truth. Go!"

All her outraged wifeness leapt into her eyes.

"I will go," she said; "but I speak the truth when I declare that I am innocent of all evil intent. I have loved you, and you alone!"

Then her heart cried out in an exceeding loud and bitter wail. "Let me—tell you all!" she entreated. "Nay, I can no longer keep anything from my lord. I care not who forbids me!"

Xerxes repulsed her with a look full of coldness and suspicion.

"It is too late," he said, "to babble of confidences now. You should have told me all when it was possible for me to listen. Now I shall find out for myself what you have chosen to withhold. Go!"

She obeyed him, her proud head hanging, her beautiful pallid face convulsed with grief and fear.

It was on that day the king gave command concerning the words of an ancient law, long since relegated with other savage barbarities to the annals of the past, that it

should again be in force. And from thenceforward executioners armed with swords stood on either side of the king's seat ready to put to death any person who approached unbidden, and to whom the monarch extended not the scepter of clemency.

And this it was supposed was done to cut off the approach of malcontents, who might have nursed divers conspiracies against the life of the king. And no man save Xerxes was aware that in the small jeweled box there had already reached the king's heart the deadliest of all poisons.

On that same day, which chanced to be the thirteenth day of the first month which is called Nisan, in another room of the palace sat Haman, the Agagite; and before him certain astrologers of Egypt, clad in black robes embroidered with cabalistic zodiacal signs and wearing high-pointed caps, were engaged in the pursuit of their sacred profession.

The Egyptians, with many strange gestures and much consulting of charts whereon the heavenly bodies were set with what truth was known to the most ancient of civilizations, were casting The Pur before the great privy counselor. The Pur consisted of large cubes of ivory, bearing strange devices carved on their several sides, the which were stained deeply with human blood drawn from the heart of an unblemished youth. To profit by the use of these strange symbols one must first utter certain prescribed words in a strange tongue; then, after shaking the narrow-mouthed vase seven times, cast forth the cubes upon a table; the devices lying uppermost determined the answer sought.

"A fortunate day for a great undertaking," was the demand of Haman. And many times did the astrologers cast The Pur upon the table before him, a broad gold piece being the price of every throw.

From day to day and from month to month did they progress slowly; yet still the stars refused to be kind, and the pile of gold darics grew apace, while Haman waxed impatient to the point of swearing strange oaths.

"Too long you are putting off the day—the day of my revenge!" he muttered, when all the months in their order had failed to reveal the propitious day, and they had now come to the last month, Adar, and to the thirteenth day of the month.

"Let my lord behold The Pur!" replied the chief astrologer piously. "For at last the stars unite with the sacred symbols of blood. On the thirteenth day of the month Adar much blood shall surely be shed in many provinces of the great king; and this is the day, moreover, chosen of the deities who preside over life and death. Of this may my lord be certain."

"Cast again, and tell me on what day I shall go to the king and obtain the request which I shall prefer," demanded the Agagite, licking his lips.

And they cast, and The Pur signified that the day was already come.

Haman flung down twenty pieces of gold before the astrologers and went out to ask audience with Xerxes.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE EDICT

To Xerxes, self-walled about with death and loneliness, there came no soft relentings, no tender recollections of hours of happiness such as he had never even dreamed of in former days. He cursed himself for his credulous folly, for his ready compliance with the counsel of Matacas, for his too easy belief in the queen's honor and truth. She was, he told himself bitterly, like all the rest—a beautiful lie—an exquisite parasite and cheat. In this black-hearted mood he received Haman.

The chief counselor quailed inwardly as he looked into his royal master's clouded face. It seemed a most unpropitious day in which to beg a favor of the king's majesty; yet The Pur had so declared it, and Queen Atossa had urged him to the course, declaring that the time was ripe for decided action. Unlimited money, power without end, revenge glutted to the full, the royal favor unstinted, his daughter the king's wife—these were the glittering guerdons held out by the astute queen. On the other hand, should he refuse to obey she pointed to certain dishonor, banishment, poverty, and perchance death in some loathsome form.

Xerxes stared at the large, florid face of his chief adviser and a forked-lightning flash burst from the black cloud of anger that encircled him.

"Why grimace and mouth in my presence like a sick ape?" he demanded. "You have, I perceive, something you wish to say. Say it and be done. I am in no mood to be approached as a hunter stalks his prey—circling wide, yet drawing ever nearer in cautious approaches. Diplomacy may suffice with such vain fellows as Meres. But I cannot be flattered, cajoled nor persuaded into anything contrary to my will. From henceforth my subjects must know it, or suffer the consequences of my displeasure."

Haman's dry tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; but he contrived to utter the opening sentence of the address he had carefully prepared.

"I am here to present to the king's excellent majesty a matter nearly concerning the welfare of his kingdom, the enlargements of his revenues and——"

"What is it? Speak in few words, or leave me."

"The great king cannot be ignorant of the fact that there is dire complaint from many provinces concerning the severity of the taxes; and this together with failures in divers crops and untoward business conditions in the great cities, has brought about a general state of poverty and restlessness among the people everywhere."

"A bad case, truly," sneered Xerxes. "What is your remedy, wise Haman?"

The privy counselor drew a deep breath and slyly moistened his lips.

"Tis chiefly of the remedy I would speak, great king. The people ignorantly suppose that they are impoverished by the late wars, in which the king has conquered gloriously."

Xerxes made an impatient gesture of denial, and Haman proceeded rapidly, his small eyes of a greenish color rolling uneasily from side to side.

"But the people are mistaken. They are not impoverished by war tax, scarcity of harvests, nor yet by the conditions of trade—all these are normal and right, fluctuating but little from year to year. The real cause of the growing discontent lies in quite another quarter; and it waxes big, day by day, and in strength and rapacity, also, even as the vampire bat which sucks its strength from the carcass to which it fastens. The kingdom of Persia is the ox which eats abundant grass in the meadows, yet grows

ever weaker, because the lifeblood is being secretly drawn from its veins by such a vampire."

"If you can speak otherwise than in riddles—which I hate—do so. What is this—vampire, which sucks the strength and substance from my kingdom?"

Again Haman's eyelids fluttered in a sudden panic of fear. Then the remembrance of the gravely scornful face of Matacas, the Hebrew scribe, came to him, and hatred contributed a false courage which fear was unable to supply.

"The vampire, my lord king, is a people—a captive race, widely scattered throughout the length and breadth of the king's dominions. This people fear not Ahuramazda, the All-wise; nor do they worship in the temples according to the Zoroastrian ceremonial prescribed by the king's excellent laws. They keep themselves separate in all things; eating their own food, worshipping their own gods, marrying always among themselves and breeding many children. Moreover, they possess for wealth the curious attraction of the magnet for the iron; so that in whatever cities or provinces they dwell gold and silver flows into their coffers without stint; to be hoarded there for—what? This no man can say; but those wise in matters of statecraft, and knowing something of the history of this people in the past, will tell you that they plan cunningly to gain control over all things Persian, even—the throne."

"Of what people do you speak? There are many races commingled in Persia."

"This people—of whom I speak only truth to the great king—mingles not with other races. They are a separate people; and ever will be. I speak, divine Xerxes, of the Hebrew race."

The king smote his knee with a great oath. Then for a long minute he appeared lost in gloomy thought.

"Granted," he said at last, in a changed voice, "that what you have said is true. What must be done to check the greed—the insolent rapacity of this race of dogs?"

"A Hebrew has chanced to offend the king," was the thought which leapt unspoken to Haman's mind.

"The remedy must be drastic and thorough," he made instant answer, his voice gathering volume and authority as befitted

the great statesman and privy counselor. "As nothing less than the death of the bloodthirsty vampire can relieve the suffering ox, so nothing less than a complete extirpation of the people of which I have spoken may restore the kingdom of Persia to its pristine power and splendor. Let this race of foul vampires be slain, man, woman and child—let not one of them remain to perpetuate his kind; then and not till then will the tide of national wealth which has been diverted from the king's subjects be restored to its lawful channels. Complaints will cease; prosperity will be restored in full measure, and the name of the king of kings will be glorified in every nation because of his foresight and wisdom; and moreover, all foreigners and captives within the length and breadth of the king's dominions will henceforth fear to attack the glorious body of Persia in any vulnerable part."

"There are many Jews in the army," mused the king; "and many more in my own employ in the palace."

"Let not personal considerations influence the great king in this matter," urged Haman, grown ever bolder, as he perceived the astonishing effect his words appeared to have exerted over the king's mind. He had not looked for so easy a victory. Nevertheless, he thought best to add his final argument.

"If my words seem good to the king, let it be now written that this people be utterly destroyed, in every province and city of the king's dominions; and I will myself see to the carrying out of the decree. I will also pay into the king's treasures ten thousand talents of silver, that there may be no further drain on the royal purse."

Haman's voice trembled slightly as he named the enormous bribe which had previously been determined upon in a secret conclave between himself and Atossa.

"My son needs money sorely," said the old queen. "I chance to know this; and he will, therefore, not refuse your request."

The king received the final words of his minister in silence. He was thinking of many things, but chiefly of his queen and of her connection with this hated race. It was the Hebrew, Matacas, who had first drawn his attention to the beautiful Babylonian princess, in whose love he vainly fancied he might forget his unhappy and

disappointing past. It was Nathan, a Hebrew prince, who had dared force his way through the king's guard to lay his guilty passion at her feet. The young queen had denied that she loved the Jew; but could she be trusted to speak truth? Was any woman to be trusted? This he must know by some means. 'But how?

Haman, mistaking the king's continued silence to mean displeasure at the sum named, again spoke.

"I mentioned ten thousand talents of silver, my lord king," he said humbly; "and this, it seemed, might more than meet the expense of the measure proposed; but I will even make it half as much again, if ten thousand talents be not sufficient—fifteen thousand—talents would——"

Xerxes arose abruptly from his seat, in token that the audience was at an end; and once more Haman's knees smote together in craven fear of anticipated failure and its terrible consequences. But the king's last word dissipated his needless terror and filled him with hardly concealed astonishment.

"The silver is yours; the people also—to do with as you will."

Instantly Haman held up the index finger of his right hand in token that scribes be called.

"The edict, great king, shall at once be written, and the measure carried out without unnecessary delay," he said, and added the formal words of confirmation of a decree; which, if unchallenged, established the spoken word of the king among the laws unalterable, which could not be broken.

That same day, Matacas, keeper of the king's seal, and chief of all the scribes in the palace of Shushan, was required to properly translate, transcribe, seal and dispatch into all the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the king's domain a document which provided for a complete and entire annihilation of the Hebrew people: "Be they men, women, infants or children; in whatever town, city or province; of whatever occupation, profession or trade, all such shall be destroyed, killed and caused to perish upon one day; to wit, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. And the spoil of these shall the inhabitants of Persia and Media take for a prey."

And thus suddenly did the storm burst, whose distant mutterings the wise scribe

had long since heard below the horizon. Such of his assistants as were of his own nationality wept and cursed and tore their beards and their garments; but Matacas spoke sternly to these, forcing them to their duty, and reminding them that the order accompanying the decree was haste; and that even now the swift posts were being prepared in readiness to go forth that same night by order of the king's majesty. He added, what they knew right well, that outcries and disobedience but meant a swifter destruction; and also that Jehovah still ruled over Israel, albeit His ear seemed heavy at times, and the arm that had saved the nation in past ages, shortened that it could not save.

All night the scribes labored at their dreadful task with white faces and haggard eyes and lips that muttered alternate prayers and curses. At dawn all was finished and the posts went out. The words of doom, moreover, were blazoned in many languages upon the walls of the city and in the courts of the palace itself, that every inhabitant might read and understand.

And Mordecai, his labors being at length finished, went out into the midst of the city, clothed in sackcloth and with ashes upon his head and beard and cried with a loud and a bitter cry.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A SAVIOR OF ISRAEL

ESTHER, the queen, had received neither word nor sign from her royal consort for many days; and her attendants, both male and female, were eying her with sly glances of curiosity, not unmixed with alarm. Was the star of this new favorite lately in its zenith so soon approaching a swift eclipse? Had she angered the king by some unthinking caprice? Or was he already weary of the charms in which he had delighted himself to the full?

In the midst of all this disquieting buzz of hardly suppressed surmise and suspicion, Esther alone remained tranquil. If she felt any fear, any humiliation of spirit, any anguish of wounded affection, any torture of jealousy, she hid all beneath a dignified reserve of manner which effectually kept at a distance those who would have hastened



to probe her wounds under a specious show of loyalty and affection.

Even the Queen Mother, ever ready to gloat over a victim of her wiles, failed to derive anticipated satisfaction from an interview which she made occasion to demand with the woman she chose to consider an impudent intruder in royal circles.

Atossa had presented herself in the palace of the new queen with more than her wonted grandeur of retinue. She had been at once admitted to one of the large, beautiful rooms, lately fitted up with a magnificence hitherto unknown even in the magnificent palace of the most magnificent of living monarchs; and here her wrath and bitterness of spirit threatened to quite overflow their bounds as she narrowly examined the rich furniture of ivory and gold, the tables of lapis lazuli and agate, the walls inlaid with precious stones and metals, the hangings of marvelous Babylonian stuffs and the rich carpets from Egypt and the more distant provinces of Ind.

The young queen entered with a graceful gliding step just as the fiery eyes of the old woman had finished their tour of inspection; she bowed low before the mother of her husband, but did not kneel as Atossa evidently expected.

"How is this?" cried the imperial scold, "that you do no reverence to the mother of the great king?—you who are not even royal in your antecedents."

"I do such reverence before the mother of Xerxes as is fitting for one who kneels not to the great king himself," answered Esther, in her soft, sweet voice. She betrayed no sign of fear or anger, but looked down from her superior height upon the shrunken frame of Atossa with a grave smile.

"Xerxes does not permit me to do obeisance before him," she added; "how then shall I bow my knee before any other human being?"

"Hah! you save your devotions for your god. Tell me, woman, whom do you worship, and after what manner?"

"I worship the one God, the All-wise, in whom alone dwells truth and purity," replied Esther in a low, resonant voice. She used the Persian words devoted to Ahuramazda, and in this she conceived that she did no wrong; since, if there was but one God, He might be variously called of the various nations without sin.

The old queen, foiled in this attack, seated herself upon a great chair and motioned to the younger woman to stand before her.

"What think you of the edict of the king against the Hebrew race?" was her next shaft.

"The king's—edict—against—the Hebrews?" faltered Esther, and her face became suddenly pallid as the snows of distant Lauristan.

Atossa observed this with cruel satisfaction.

"What!" she exclaimed, in affected surprise, "then it was not you who influenced my son against the cowardly foreign dogs? You did not even know of it? I confess that you surprise me. How can this be the case with the king's latest—favorite?"

The old queen's insulting emphasis upon the last word roused Esther from her condition of paralyzed terror, as the sharp touch of the goad rouses a spirited steed. She lifted her head and gazed at the older woman with an hauteur equal to her own.

"You mistake, madame and queen," she said distinctly; "I am the king's—wife."

"You are also a Hebrew—and condemned to death under the law!" hissed the old queen, throwing prudence to the winds in her fury. "Even now your scheming kinsman, Matacas, the king's despised tool and parasite, beats upon his breast in sackcloth without the palace gate; whilst you—" her look was terrible—"deck yourself with jewels like a low-born concubine. But you shall perish with the rest, woman, be assured of that!"

Then she swept away in a whirlwind of rage and strong perfumes and rustling silks and floating tissues, leaving the young queen half fainting in sick terror.

Esther recovered herself presently by a strong effort of the will, and in this hour of her dire need she again lifted her heart in agonized petition to the unseen Presence which she had learned to find in the silence, and in whose unfailing effluence she had discovered a singular joy and peace which the world could not reach. How long she remained alone with bowed head and petitioning lips she knew not; but she suddenly became aware of a strange presence in the room. The figure was that of a majestically beautiful woman, clothed in a voluminous garment of white which shimmered

curiously as if the body beneath emitted actual light. The eyes of the woman were set full upon the young queen, and there was a look in them of great tenderness—yet of tenderness blended with strength and strong encouragement. As Esther gazed at the still face she felt herself filled with an unreasoning comfort—that asked not its source, but knew itself to be.

"Call now thy kinsman, Mordecai, and bid him cease his mourning and be of good courage."

The words seemed impressed upon Esther's consciousness rather than spoken. Then of a sudden the strange, shining woman was gone, and the queen remained alone. She called her attendants presently and questioned them straitly; but they all agreed that no visitor had gone in or out from the queen's presence that day save Atossa, the mother of the king. They looked also to see a frightened horror or a ghastly fear writ large upon the face of their mistress. What they did see filled them with amazement. The queen's large eyes held a mysterious light of peace, and her mouth curved itself in new lines of strength and beauty.

"Go," she said to Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, "and find Matacas, the scribe. Fetch to him garments also, and bid him lay off the sackcloth of mourning and be of good courage."

The eunuch returned anon and informed the queen that he had found Matacas, even before the King's Gate—for no one might enter the palace wearing the emblems of grief or dishonor, and that the Hebrew scribe wept unceasingly and beat upon his breast because of the edict.

"Moreover," quoth Hatach, "the Jew refused to receive the garment at my hand; and he bade me tell the queen's majesty that all the Hebrew nation had been sold for both slaughter and pillage to Xerxes the king for the sum of ten thousand talents of silver; and that this had been done by no other than Haman, the Agagite."

Hatach delivered this message word for word, as he had been bidden. He also eyed the queen with large eyes of wonder, and waited with his curled and perfumed head cocked impudently to one side until she should cry out or faint.

"If the queen will but listen to me," he went on, lowering his voice to a whisper,

"I counsel instant flight—with what jewels and valuables may be hastily gathered. I will myself accompany the queen, and bestow her in a place of safety; for I am a man of substance, and have estates in Erivan. Be advised by me, lovely queen. With the king's affections alienated and the old queen an avowed enemy, the palace is no place of safety for a young and beautiful woman of the queen's nationality. Believe me, flight is the only—"

Esther checked him with an imperative gesture.

"Be silent!" she commanded. "I do not require your counsels. Go now again to Matacas, the king's scribe, and tell him that the queen commands him to come to her. Turn not to the right hand nor the left; but instantly obey me."

Matacas came to the queen after an hour or more. He had put off his sackcloth, but a garment of sad-colored stuff covered his gaunt figure from his head to his feet, and his great beard was torn and disordered.

The young queen, in her beautiful robes of white and violet and gold, and wearing the many jewels her tire-woman had put on her, came to meet him.

"Tell me," she entreated, "what is this word I had from thee by the mouth of Hatach—whom I do not trust? And from Queen Atossa also, who seems to have no other feeling save hatred for everyone?"

Forthwith Matacas repeated to her all the terrible words of the edict which the king had made, and which was now published in all the provinces both far and near.

"You will do well, woman, to put off the garments of praise in which you have clothed yourself as for a festival," he said, and his voice held the harsh melancholy of generations of mourning prophets, "and put on the garb of woe and mourning. For think not that you will escape the doom of your people in this gilded palace. There will be those appointed to take your life even here."

"But surely Jehovah reigneth in Israel, as He has ever reigned!" cried Esther. "He will save us!"

"Not always does Jehovah listen to the cries of His people—alas!" groaned Mordecai; "for behold, we have all sinned grievously, and there is no prophet, no leader, no one to save, unless—" He

ceased speaking, and looked half sternly, half tenderly, into the beautiful face uplifted to his— "There is no savior for Israel," he repeated, "unless thou, my child, art the chosen instrument for our relief."

"I—Mordecai? Nay, what can I do?"

"Thou must even go to the king, and tell him of thy nationality, and entreat him to give to thee thy life and the lives of thy people. There is no other way."

"But—Mordecai; the king—is—angry with me—he does not trust me, because I would not break my promise made to you so long ago. Ah! if I might have told him—while yet he loved me. But now—I fear him."

"Nevertheless, my child, you must obey me. It was not that you might wear jewels, sleep soft, and be nourished upon the fat of many lands that Jehovah led me to bring you to the palace—but for such a time as this! And mark you well, woman, if you refuse to do this thing which has been appointed to you, deliverance will arise for the Jews from some other source—Jehovah will not suffer His chosen ones to utterly perish, but thou and thine shall be swept away, and black oblivion shall swallow both thee and me."

Esther trembled exceedingly as these solemn words sounded in her young ears. She laid fast hold upon Mordecai's garment of sad-colored cloth and closed her eyes.

"There is a law—a terrible law—have you not heard of it?—that no one—either man or woman—may come into the king's presence and—live—except such as he calls—or those to whom he holds out the scepter of his clemency—and I—woe is me!—I have not been bidden to come to the king these many days. And I am—afraid!"

"Nevertheless, thou wilt go—unbidden," answered Mordecai. "Think well of what I have said, my child, and be brave and very courageous, for so shalt thou be blessed, and it may be that Jehovah shall deliver thee—even as he delivered his servant Daniel from the wrath of the king and from the jaws of the lions."

The queen drew a deep sobbing breath.

"Go thou," she said, "and gather all the Jews that are in Shushan, and fast ye for

me, and neither eat nor drink three days—night or day. I also and my maidens will fast, and so—I will go to the king. And if I perish, I perish!"

On the third day thereafter Esther bade her fainting women put on her the robes of state, and the diadem which the king himself had once set upon her head. And when all was finished she stood among them tall and pure as a stately lily. Like a white flower also, was her face, and her eyes burned beneath their curved lashes like distant stars.

Then, with her trembling maidens following in her wake, as became a great queen, she passed out from her chamber, and with stately tread walked toward the great Hall of Columns, where sat the king in audience, surrounded by his guards.

Now she had passed under the great portico, where swallows darted in and out with wild sweet cries to their nests in the carved rafters, and anon she moved under the darkling shadows of the vast square columns. She paused at length near one of the great winged lions of the king's antechamber, a voiceless prayer to Elohim, the Hebrew's God, rising from her white lips. Within, the slanting sun struck sparks of splendor from the gemmed throne and from the waiting swords of the executioners stationed on either side of the dais. And now she could see her husband's dark face beneath the kingly tiara; he was frowning as if with surprise and displeasure, as his eye fell upon the little procession advancing toward the throne.

"Who is this?" he demanded sharply, "who thus appears before me unbidden?"

The queen's slight figure swayed toward him a little, like a tall white flower upon its stalk; yet in that supreme moment she thought only that she was once more in the presence of the man she loved. Her eyes, deep and wonderful as the eyes of a glorified spirit, rested full upon him.

Slowly the king raised his golden scepter tipped with a great jewel that blazed like a lesser sun in that shaded place.

And Esther touched the scepter of the king's clemency, her eyes still upon his—questioning him, pleading with him, adoring him.

(To be continued.)

# THE LAST VIOLIN

BY PAUL CRISSEY



HAD to give the old Dutchman a place to sleep," said Eldridge half in self-defense and half pityingly. "He won't hurt anything in the old house, and even if he does, I guess I can stand it."

He paused and polished his glasses. The light flashing back from them ran restlessly along the bars of his cashier's cage as he peered through them with kindly eyes.

"You see, I've got my big, new house up there on the hill," he went on, while his customer tucked a bank book into his inner pocket and counted clumsily but surely the pile of bills which cashier Eldridge had pushed out through the little window. "I'm keeping the old place as a sort of memento to the old folks. You see, Grandfather cut every stick of timber in that house and sawed the lumber in his own sawmill—the first in this whole section of the country. Every tree grew on the old homestead."

"What kind o' wood is it?" inquired the depositor, wetting a forefinger on his acreage of glistering tongue.

"Spruce and curled maple—big, solid slabs of it. That was considered a mighty high-flying house in its day. Of course it isn't much like our houses nowadays, but everything's improved lots since then." He paused, replaced his spectacles and removed the black sleeves which protected his shirt from the counter before him.

"Yep, that's right," responded the man outside the cage as he thoughtfully kicked one heel with the toe of his other boot. "We can make houses pretty swell nowadays—using lattices for portières betwixt rooms and fireplaces already made up. I guess I'll stay right out on the farm this

winter—you let the old Dutchman stay in the house; it'll protect the insurance for you, anyhow."

It had begun to rain heavily and the big drops splashed against the dusty plate-glass windows of the bank. In a moment or so the street was deserted and from the doorways of the stores the shower-trapped shoppers called back and forth to their friends who had also sought convenient shelter from the rain.

After putting away the books and cash, Mason Eldridge swung the big door of the vault close. Then he nodded to a lanky clerk who seemed to be waiting to catch his eye, and the youth lost no time in getting out. A lighted cigar between his teeth, Eldridge stood before the door and looked up the street. The rain was fast growing from a shower into a storm.

"I won't turn the old Dutchman out," thought Eldridge. "He very nearly earns his rent and, besides, I don't know as I want any family living in father's house—the one in which he was born and which Grandfather built. He'll stay there this winter, anyway, and I'll tell him he's helping me by protecting the insurance—which is surely all the house is worth." He puffed stolidly on a cigar and watched the rain bombard the sidewalk with big drops.

In the yellow light of the storm a fragile and stooped figure pattered stiffly through the mud at the crossing, his thin, gray hair fluttering back from underneath the small, battered derby like the ribbons of a torn flag. The rain ran off his bent back in torrents and the mud splashed out from under his plodding feet at every step.

"Why, it's Ludwig!" ejaculated Eldridge, who had been watching the progress of the old man and inwardly calling him



*"Ach, Gott!" he cried, "I cannot now make der veeleen!"*

a fool who didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain.

"Well, what brings you out here in this rain, Ludwig?" he asked in kindly tones when he had admitted the water-soaked figure to the bank. Little rivulets of water darted down the man's clothes and rolled away in streams and tiny pools upon the mosaic floor of the bank.

"It iss raining und de Frau dinks dat you make cold if you get vet—yess? So I brink un umprella." One hand reached under the front of the threadbare coat and a carefully protected umbrella, dry as tinder, was extracted and placed in Eldridge's hands.

"Why, man alive!" exclaimed the banker. "Why on earth didn't you use it? You're soaking wet!"

Half apologetically the old man answered: "It vass not mine, not for me to use but you; so I bring it—you use it, no?"

"Well, I'll be ——!" exclaimed El-

dridge in astonishment. Then, under his breath he added: "I guess that old house of mine will be in good enough hands this winter all right!" Then aloud: "You'll use it now, Ludwig, with me. Let's go home."

Homes for Ludwig Schultz in America had been many. Fortunes had been turned on too many others to notice the drawn lines of care, the hard marks of work and the etchings of frequent hunger which had become part of old Ludwig's countenance. The latest happenings had been the hardest. Enticed by promises of steady work with a bridge gang he had gathered together his carpenter tools—all he had left—and had made his way to the little New York town, where he had been laid off by the boss carpenter because he was "dead timber." But Ludwig knew it was not because he was too old to work. He could work, and work hard; but somehow his fingers did not stand



the strain of the heavy carpentering and, as his back ached dully, he longed for a chance to wield the small steel instruments as he had done in Germany—to fashion the violins from the fragrant, seasoned woods as in the cottage by the Black Forest. And at last out of work, with no money, he had stood before the big window of the State Bank of Lansing and felt that the town must surely prove a haven for him. So he pushed within the door and faced Cashier Eldridge for the first time.

In a simple, straightforward way he told his story, with the result that Eldridge had described to him the height of his wood pile and mentioned also the old, vacant, four-room house which had been built a century before.

"My grandfather built it himself," Eldridge had told Ludwig, and the old Dutchman had listened intently. "He cut the wood from right around here and put the house up to stay."

Eldridge had laughed reminiscently as he continued: "There hasn't been anyone living there for a good many years, and there's only one room that's furnished. If you want to camp out there you're welcome. I'm just keeping it going as a sort of remembrance to the old folks." Then he laughed—and Ludwig with him, for the old German had found a home at last!—a place where he could tinker and whittle evenings and where, possibly, he could have a chance to make just one more violin—just one more to loosen up the knots in his hands and to work his stiff fingers into suppleness again. He longed for a chance to see the clean shavings curl back over his blades, and in his mind's eye he pictured the gradual growth of an instrument, under the touch of his tools.

Then he made a discovery. One of his tools was gone. He made this discovery one night when he carefully drew out the black cloth bag in which he had carried them since he had been in the new country. It was a disheartening discovery. Tools cost money; he had none! The wood he sawed during the day gave him barely enough money on which to live and he felt that the loss was irreparable.

"Ach, Gott!" he cried to himself that night, and the candlelight flickered at the fervency of his cry. "I cannot now make der veeoleen. I cannot, cannot make der

veeoleen!" and his head dropped wearily into the crook of his arm. The instruments were all there except the purfling tool—but without that Ludwig well knew he would never shape another violin. He paced the floor distractedly, sadly shaking his head while the shadow of his bent, old body gyrated grotesquely on the walls of the little room.

"One more veeoleen!" he cried passionately. "One more und, ach, Gott, I will be happy! I must get the purfling tool; I am old but I must get the purfling tool and the wood. Just one more veeoleen!" His voice echoed through the other rooms of the house and soon every nook and corner of the century-old house knew the secret of Ludwig Schultz's ambition—*just one more violin*. Soon, however, the faint, yellow flame of the candle was snuffed out and the old German with two ambitions—one to live and the other to make a last violin—was asleep.

The days which followed were long, aching days for Ludwig. Eldridge, through his influence with the townspeople, brought odd jobs to the old man, but the most of them were in the way of wood sawing, and with aching back Ludwig sent his buck saw slowly, patiently through the wood piles of the villagers. Then the calloused hands gripped an ax and its strokes were followed by neatly corded piles of stove wood. Conscientious to painfulness, the old man worked from seven each morning until seven at night, and gradually the silver pieces which found their way into the State Bank were growing into a respectable pile.

But meantime the crook of the old man's back had gained a larger arc and his thin hair was even scragglier than before. He lived frugally, saving every penny he could possibly spare from his meager living.

"Maybe he's a miser," was the thought that flashed through Eldridge's mind one afternoon when the old German had deposited twenty-six cents to his account. But this surmise was dispelled two days later when the cashier saw Ludwig buy a loaf of bread for a hungry-looking tramp.

"I'll have to watch the old fellow," muttered Eldridge when he saw this charity. "They'd take everything he had if they had half a chance—and he'd be easy enough to let them."

Soon after this Ludwig paused in his



*"Gott in Himmel! Such fine grain!"*

work and his heart fell within him. "Ach, it must be so," he muttered to himself, and before his eyes he held up his two thick, coarse hands. "Mine hands must be saved. Dey vill not do the work if they get so big and heavy," and he well knew that unless this growing clumsiness was remedied in time he never would make the violin. So each night after that he bathed them carefully, and in one of the vacant rooms of the old house, in the dim candlelight he cut and cut and cut with his knife until the pile of shavings grew to a heap which threatened in time to fill the center of the room. Soon his skill returned. When once he could feel it come with the softening of his hands and the loosening of his finger joints he worked with a new hope. Patiently, persistently, systematically he kept on treating his hands and carving at this

and at that in an effort to regain his skill.

First he made a tiny doll bed for little Bessie Eldridge—who wept and laughed with delight when the white-haired old man called, late one night after work, and gave it to her at the door. And the next morning Eldridge quietly transferred a five-dollar bill from his own pocket to the German's account, saying: "Ludwig will never know but what he deposited it himself!"

By sounding his customers the old German soon found that there was better work than wood sawing to be done and he chose it with a view to saving his hands. Although dead tired, each night he went painstakingly through the routine of bathing his hands and whittling at this and that. The pile of shavings in what had

been a dining room of the old house grew steadily in size and the little carved odds and ends of wood which he had picked up and which he carved for practice found their way into many Lansing homes, and yet no one but Eldridge offered to pay him for the trinkets which brought rapturous joy to the children.

Eventually he rubbed some of his work with a cloth dipped in shellac and in varnish, and this step was followed by a radical change in his evening's employment. He made a bench and a wooden vise, with stops and trays. It was complete in every detail, and the night it was finished he dropped asleep where he sat, the candle sputtering fiercely as if angry at being left alone to pursue its task.

The old man fell into happy dreams of seasoned wood, solid, fragrant blocks of it! It cost money and yet, in his visions, the old man could see enough of it to make hundreds of violins. Then, with a faint idea of something warm on his foot, he suddenly awoke. Stifling smoke was all about him, but through it he could see the hot glow of the burning shavings. He could scarcely breathe, but his thoughts were clear. Stumbling to a window he threw it open. Then he whipped off his coat and in the fast-clearing room he threshed madly at the flames, beating them down. His coat was in shreds and his arms burned, but not until he sat panting and triumphant with every flame and ember of the fire extinguished did he realize how terribly the strain had taxed his strength.

He was weak almost to fainting, but the fire was out! He had done his work, but his coat—his only coat—was reduced to a charred rag. Then he slept till daylight.

The morning showed that little damage had been done and the old German thoughtfully muttered a few phrases in his native tongue. His eye lighted on a scorched and blackened streak on the door. How quickly the flames had eaten into the heavy, unpaneled door! It must be very dry, reflected the old man, as he sat there on the floor.

Why, it was a hundred years old; Eldridge had said so! It was a solid slab of native wood, painted like the other woodwork in the old house, but the burned streak revealed the wood below the paint. Ludwig reached out his hand and pecked gently

with his knife point at the charred spot. It interested him, this smooth-cutting wood. Quickly he arose and, picking up a chisel, he shaved away the paint on the unburned portion of the floor.

"Gott in Himmel!" he ejaculated, "such fine grain!" For there before his old eyes lay a clean, mellow, century-old spruce of beautiful straight grain, the kind of wood which he could carve like putty, the kind of wood to delight the heart of a violinmaker! It was wonderful. No need to buy wood now, for here it was in the house. Aged wood which would make a violin like the Cremona or the famous Stradivarius.

"But maybe he won't give up the door," thought the German. "It is not right to cut it so unless Herr Eldritch can say yes! I make my veeoleen if I live. I go see Herr Eldritch and perhaps Gott gif me also the maple—the century-old maple!"

And with the elasticity of youth in his steps the old man burst into the bank where Eldridge sat dreaming. And yet he was not dreaming. Far from it. The lanky clerk had gone and before Eldridge lay a long column of figures which represented the money that had gone with the lanky clerk.

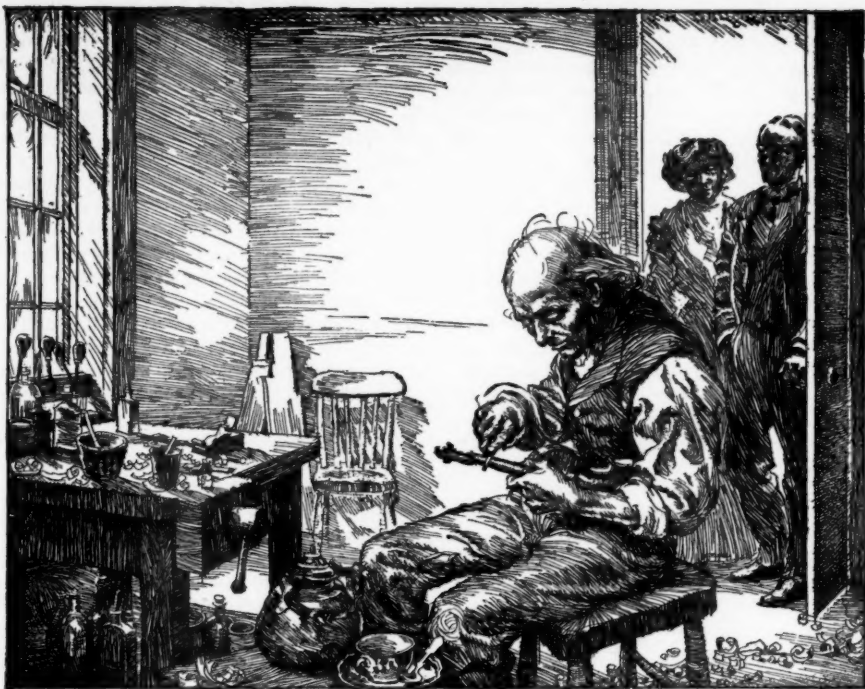
"Mein Herr," began Ludwig. "I haf come with a question to ask, yes? I think it iss very vell." He paused, noticing the surprised, troubled, pained look on the face of the banker.

"Derr iss somedings wrong—no? Yes?"

"Yes, there's something wrong, Ludwig," said Eldridge, "and it's very wrong." The German glanced inquiringly at the clerk's vacant stool and Eldridge nodded assent.

"Gone," he said shortly, "and taken so much that I'm afraid that there'll be a run on the bank. Now, Ludwig, here's all the money you gave me to take care of for you. You're going to get yours, even if the rest don't." He paused and waited.

The German's hand closed over the small roll of bills and he forgot his errand. With his bent back he glided noiselessly out of the bank, then stopped on the pavement, for Eldridge's voice was calling him. He turned. Maybe he was going to lose all of his savings after all. Maybe Eldridge was only playing with him and was going to take his money again.



*"His workroom was barred to all except Mr. Eldridge and his wife."*

He reëntered and faced Eldridge, who came out of the cage and looked into his face. It was smoky. The German's eyes were red with loss of sleep and the smoke of the night before and he was coatless. It was pretty chilly weather outdoors, but Ludwig had not noticed it.

"Where's your coat?" inquired the banker.

"I haf lost it, burned it up. I had a fire last night, mine herr, und it nearly burned up the little house, but I ketched it in time and it chust sizzled a little, den vent out." He paused. It was a long speech for him and the banker was looking at him queerly.

"And you lost your coat fighting a fire in that little old shack? Why, man, the insurance was—" but there he paused, for suddenly he remembered just why he was saving the place at all. It had been his grandfather's home and his father's. He was glad that Ludwig had saved it and,

after all, what did it matter? There would be trouble that the clerk had gone with the money, and then there would be more money. He turned to Ludwig.

"I want you to go and get another suit. You need one." He handed over some money to Ludwig, but Ludwig pushed it back.

"Nein, nein! I haf money. I vant somedings else von a coat. Vill you get it for me—no, yes?" He would tell his benefactor—he would tell him—all about the violin, and the tool which he must replace—all about the mellow wood in the door, seasoned for a hundred years, with straight, true grain. And in broken English he did tell him, and finally, when he ended he thrust into the astonished banker's hand the savings and made him promise to get the coveted purfling tool from the city.

"I von't liiff long," he cried; "I am old

now und it von't be long—but just one more—just one more vecoleen," and with this cry of an old man's ambition in his ears the troubled banker promised the old craftsman a good home while he made the instrument.

"And you can have every door in that house if you need it," he added—but Ludwig Schultz only shook his head and said:

"Nein, nein, mine herr! only von—only von, und if I liff to finish it I say it shall be beautiful, and its music lovelier than you haf ever heard."

"All the woodwork in the room in which you sleep," remarked Eldridge, as they parted, "is curled maple. My grandfather, they tell me, was very proud of that room."

"Gott," devoutly exclaimed the old man, bowing his white head. "I giff thanks!"

From that day on Ludwig lived in a back chamber of the banker's house, to which his tools and his bench were removed. His meals were brought to him, but he ate little, always answering Mrs. Eldridge with a promise to "make it fair" some day. He rarely left the room, and through the long winter days the steady, patient cutting could be heard by any member of the family who approached his retreat.

His workroom was barred to all except Mr. Eldridge and his wife, and to these two Ludwig would give only a vacant, kindly smile and answer their questions vaguely, as he bent over the wood he was carving. Some days—once for an entire week—no noise was heard but the rasping of a file and then again for another week the only sound that came was the scratchy noise of a stone as Ludwig Schultz dropped his work to bring his tools back to perfect edge.

Once the old man, who had grown pale and weak, called the banker and his wife into the room and proudly showed them a very thin piece of board.

"It iss der face," he stated in a quiet voice. He seldom spoke in these days and his voice seemed to have a strange, exalted pitch.

"Why! I thought it would be nearly done by this time," remarked the banker, and his answer was a faint smile from Ludwig.

"It iss my last one, mine herr, und it must be *fine*. I work fast but I do not hurry. It iss my life—the last of it und it

must be a goot ending." Then he fell silently to work again.

For weeks he was as completely buried from the world as if he were a Crusoe on a desert isle, and not a word of what had become of the old pioneer house reached his ears, nor did he hear about it when the lanky clerk was caught with the money—all save a few dollars—and it was restored to the bank. He was in another world—a world of keen tools, of slender fingers, the world of the creative craftsman. It was his life and into it he put his soul. And as the violin grew under the cunning, trembling old hands his life grew weaker. He became incredibly fragile and occasionally a word or two of soft-spoken German dropped from his lips, as if his mind had carried his body back to the edge of the Black Forest to complete his creative work.

Even when Harenak, the greatest violinist, was billed to give one performance in the town, Ludwig knew nothing about it until Eldridge forced him to listen to the news. Then the old man's eyes lighted up with new fire. One whole month, then the violin, his last violin, would be completed, and he would make Harenak play it for him. It would play well, the old man knew, for the wood was old and seasoned and the tone would be sweet, mellow, enticing. Day after day with sustained but feverish impulse Ludwig worked alone, impatient of the slightest interruption from Eldridge or his wife. Two days alone were spent for the mixing and the heating of the glue and when finally the beautiful instrument lay bound tightly in clamps, the old man set to work on the bridge. His hand was very shaky and time after time he cut through the delicate scroll, but at last, by frequent rests and infinite patience, he managed to complete the bridge. Upon the day before Harenak was due, Ludwig Schultz was shaking like a leaf. Never for a moment did he let the violin out of his sight, and finally, as evening grew dark around him, he shrank, timid and silent, in the corner of his little room. Eldridge stood in the door, attired in evening dress.

"I have it all arranged, Ludwig," he began kindly, for great tears had rolled from the German's eyes and were coursing down his cheeks. "I have fixed it for you. Harenak will see your violin and tell you what he thinks of it."



But Ludwig could not answer. He seemed very old and worn and more delicate and fragile than the thing he had created. His last wish had been realized—and now what if the instrument of his last passion, that into which he had put all the sweetness and strength of his chastened soul, should fail to voice all that with which he had invested it?

Into the cold draught of an ill-lighted alley Eldridge led Ludwig, who under his threadbare coat had the violin clutched tenderly to his heart. It was his life—the last part of his life—and he loved it inexpressibly. He was going to lose the music that came from it. He knew now, he would, and his face was flushed with pleasure.

In the brilliantly lighted dressing room of the opera house Eldridge led the aged German and saw him place in the long, slender, shapely hands of Harenak his precious violin.

Nervously the great musician snapped a polished finger nail against the bottom of the instrument, and the old man scarcely breathed. Harenak looked up in surprise. Then he stripped the strings from his own costly instrument and quickly, deftly, placed them on Ludwig's. Gently drawing the white hairs of the bow across the strings, he tuned the violin and Ludwig watched the resin fall in fine, powdery flakes to the

floor. His eyes closed for an instant and his shrunken figure shook with emotion.

Slow and soft like a breath from a field of clover came the notes—sweet, stately, enchanting strains which floated through the great, barnlike building, filling its every nook and corner until even the cobwebs high on the ceiling beams vibrated gently with the clear, singing notes of the "Ave Maria."

"Magnificent!" cried Harenak. "What is the price, Mein Herr? Name the price!"

"Nein," stammered Ludwig, and then fell silent as once more the ravishing notes from the violin, fashioned from the old pioneer home, filled the air.

"I must have it!" urged Harenak, as he played softly on and Eldridge bent over the figure of the old man and whispered:

"Shall he have it, Ludwig? He will pay good money for it." But the old German was nodding vaguely and his answering words barely reached Eldridge above the strain from the violin.

"It was my life," whispered Ludwig Schultz, and his eyes were filled with the music of the old violin. "It was my last ambition. It is my gift to you. It is all I could do." And with the parting strain of the "Ave Maria" the light faded from Ludwig's eyes.

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## COVENANT

By ALDIS DUNBAR

TROTH-PLIGHT alone unto your need of me  
Are these, my life and soul and heart, so long  
As need remains; once past, believe me strong  
To turn, with silent lips, and leave you free.



## THE BOY CRUSADER

By AGNES LEE

*FATHER, my feet are bleeding sore,  
With stubble, rock, and stem.  
I see a roof, the hilltop o'er!  
Is this Jerusalem?*

Jerusalem is far—perchance  
As far again away  
As our beloved land of France  
We left at Spring's first ray.

*Father, I hunger. Bread is none.  
The way seems long to go!  
Now have no hunger, little one,  
But hunger for the foe.*

The Arab and the Turk now tear  
The sacred citadel,  
And alien armies cloud the air  
Like grasshoppers of hell.

The son of the Egyptian slave  
Proclaims the pagan horde.  
Then on! then on! to swell the brave  
Militia of the Lord!



*Drawn by Arthur Becker.*

*"Father, I see a sunlit tower!"*



*Father, at noon an aged man  
Dropped fainting on the wold.  
I saw thee loiter from the van,  
I saw thee take his gold.*

*By Urban and by Adrian, yea!  
The deed was in the right.  
'Tis writ: "The thief of yesterday  
Shall be to-morrow's knight."*

*Father, I see a sunlit tower  
Gleam like a diadem!  
Is this the honey and the flower?  
Is this Jerusalem?*

*Hush, child! 'Tis but a stable-town  
Where beasts of burden wait.  
'Tis not for many a red sundown  
We reach the holy gate.*

*Father, last night I could not rest.  
I saw, from my dim place,  
A face lie laughing on thy breast.  
'Twas not my mother's face.*

*By Urban and by Adrian, hush!  
The crimson cross shall win  
For him who seeks the battle-rush  
Remission for all sin.*

*O I am but thy step's delay!  
O father, loose my hand!  
I can no longer keep the way,  
Nor reach the holy land.*

*Yet it were sweet to live, and toil  
Unto the warring tryst,  
To spill my blood upon the soil  
That drank the blood of Christ.*

*Father! I see a rock-built dome  
Within my closing eyes;  
I see a city through the gloam,  
And sworded angels rise.*

*They come, they come, with shout and stir!  
In hosts they gather them!  
Is——this——the holy sepulcher?  
Is——this——Jerusalem?*



# THE CRITICS' STRIKE

BY JAMES L. FORD



T was on a Sunday evening that the dramatic critics of New York, after a session that had lasted nearly all day behind the closed doors of Critics' Union No. 1, William Winter Lodge, determined to go out on strike, their grievances being too many matinées and musical comedies and the discharge of one of their number without sufficient cause.

The newspaper proprietors, hoping for an amicable and speedy adjustment of the matter, made no mention of the strike on Monday morning; and throughout that day the citizens of the town went about their usual vocations, little dreaming that their regular supply of dramatic intelligence was about to be suddenly cut off. As for the critics, they remained quietly at their headquarters, turning a deaf ear to all invitations to return to work on the old basis, but resolutely refusing to countenance any acts of violence. Indeed, their peaceful attitude during the whole period of the strike gained for them the hearty respect even of those to whom the lockout proved the greatest hardship.

They had chosen well the moment for revolt, these claw-hammered, crush-hatted toilers, for surely on no single night since the first performance of "Ralph Roister Doister" had so many important plays been scheduled for production in New York as now. There was the brilliant British musical comedy, "The Upstairs Girl," fresh from its thousand-night run in London, and bearing the well-known earmarks of its author, Mr. Stealmore Tricks, as well as of the ancient Weber and Fields shows from which it had been adapted. There was also "The Smart Aleck Kids," dramatized from a comic newspaper supplement and

distinctly reminiscent, even in its stage form, of the *Fliegende Blätter*, from which it was first stolen. There was that great emotional drama of New York society, "Only a Perfect Lady," designed to exhibit in the most pleasing light the mimetic gifts of Miss Daisy Corncake, late of the chorus and now hailed by the press agent as a worthy rival of Fritzi Scheff. And there was that splendid apotheosis of polite comedy, "The Monkeys in the Zoo," presented by those eminent artists, Messrs. Liver and Bacon, and already stamped with the unqualified approval of Rhode Island and western Connecticut. But why prolong the list? Let it suffice to say that on this night of all others in the year, with the very cream of native and imported dramatic art spreading itself generously before the public, the critics went out on strike, leaving the town face to face with a famine in theatrical news and criticism.

When Tuesday morning dawned, dreary and ominously cold, with falling rain and pelting sleet, and the citizens who had slept calmly in their beds without thought of the disaster awaiting them, found the newspapers absolutely bare of the precious columns of advice, discussion, and anecdote to which they had looked forward so eagerly, and in their place a brief editorial notice announcing that because of the great critics' strike those columns would remain dark until further notice, New Yorkers began to realize the extent as well as the serious nature of the calamity that had befallen them.

"What!" they exclaimed, "are there to be no more criticisms of current attractions—no daily chronicles of the important moves on the theatrical chessboard? How, then, are we to find out who Arnold Daly's leading lady is to-day, or under whose management he will play to-morrow? Is no

press agent to lift the veil from the home life of the shrinking Birdie Butterscotch? Where are the shows of yesterday, and how are the members of the original 'Floradora' sextette passing their declining years? What tidings of the ocean steamer vaudeville, promised by Charles Frohman, with 'students' nights' for the schools of porpoise and dolphin encountered on the way?"

There was no answer to these questions. All that was known was that not since the great anthracite coal strike had the city been threatened with a lockout fraught with such serious consequences as this.

The evening papers were, like those of the morning, entirely bare of theatrical tidings, but each one printed a statement, issued from the headquarters of the newspaper barons and intended to allay the popular excitement. These notices urged the citizens to remain quiet and promised a speedy settlement of the strike; after which, they were assured, a double portion of criticism would be printed each day so as to insure a full week's work by the critics and prevent the public from losing anything by the lockout. Lulled by these promises, the town slept quietly that night, but long before daylight the streets were astir with eager citizens in quest of the morning papers and carefully scanning their columns for those inspired "notices" which they had long since come to look upon as so much intellectual food and drink. But all in vain did they search. Not a single paragraph relating in any way to the stage rewarded their efforts. But there were more false promises of speedy relief, and these served only to intensify the widespread feelings of bitterness and despair and an insensate hunger after dramatic news.

At noon a committee of citizens waited on the theatrical managers and implored them to give a little temporary relief to the situation by supplying the public with criticisms of their own. But the managers diplomatically made answer that, although they had always desired to relieve the critics of as much of their work as possible by supplying them with dramatic criticisms of their own productions, nevertheless they did not feel like interfering at the present moment.

The newspaper barons were found to be firm in their determination not to yield to the critics' demands, though they were willing to pay an extra rate for day work,

which, considering the unusual amount of suffering entailed at this time of the year by bad actors in Ibsen matinees, was a very important concession. They admitted to the committee that the strike did not find them wholly unprepared, and that a carload of negro critics, in charge of a celebrated strike-breaker, was on its way from Louisiana and would be put to work as soon as they could be supplied with crush hats.

Cheered by this intelligence, as well as by a false rumor, artfully disseminated, that a band of Chinese critics had been smuggled across the Canadian border and would soon be mustered in, the town breathed more freely. But the critics met the situation promptly by calling upon the managers, who were now shown to be frankly in collusion with them, and arranging a special presentation of a poetical comedy by Percy Mackaye, which the unfortunate Africans were compelled to attend immediately after their arrival in New York. At the close of the performance they threw up their jobs and returned to the South, where they are now working cheerfully in the cotton fields.

The attempt to substitute cheap critical labor for expert talent having thus failed, the week wore on without further change in the situation; but when the Sunday papers appeared without their usual pages of dramatic matter, the smoldering fires of discontent broke out afresh and public sentiment manifested itself in an imperative call for a mass meeting in Union Square.

Meanwhile the sufferings of patients in the hospitals had reached an acute state, and the ambulances were kept busy bringing in people stricken down in the streets by an overwhelming thirst for criticism. An especially sad case was that of the author of "Only a Perfect Lady," who, having for the first time in his career escaped general malediction on the morning following one of his productions, became deeply depressed, refused food for two days, and on the third, having looked in vain through all the papers for the customary animadversions on his character, talents, and family, escaped from his attendants, and before he could be apprehended had actually offered a play to the managers of the New Theater. His relatives, realizing that all reason had fled, had him committed by the nearest magistrate to the observation ward in Bellevue.

Warned by the severity of his case, as

well as by the sufferings of the other patients, the Bellevue house physician went boldly to the clubhouse of the Friars, an organization composed chiefly of press agents, and in the name of common humanity begged them to furnish him with a little dramatic intelligence with which to save human lives. The noble-hearted Friars were deeply touched by the physician's earnest appeal and at once handed out paragraphs descriptive of the splendid artistic triumphs of Kicksey Brigandsa and the mother-of-pearl automobile of Crazie Pollette, while Mr. Toxin Worm offered to deliver an address on the unselfish efforts of Lee Shubert to place the drama on a higher intellectual plane.

Deeply grateful to the Friars and loud in praise of their humane, high-minded action, the physician hurried back to his patients.

"Thank God, you have come at last!" cried the head nurse, whom he found bending over the bedside of an unconscious patient. "All day long he has been begging me to read to him about the dainty flat where Pansy Pinktoes entertains her literary and artistic friends, but alas! I had no paragraph to read to him. Half an hour ago, having vainly entreated me to tell him the name of the distinguished actor whose new play was such an overwhelming success that he had decided to go into vaudeville, he sank into a state of coma, and I fear it will be impossible to rouse him. But see, he is opening his eyes! His lips move! Quick with your budget of news or it will be too late!"

Lifting the unfortunate man in his arms, the doctor hastily imparted to him the health-bringing tidings that "Genial Manager Lewistein, having learned by the merest chance that Miss Susie Kerzoo, of the 'Fun on the Clothes Line' company, had a dear friend in the anthracite coal business, at once made her the leading lady of the refined and merry comedy with which her fame is identified. Miss Kerzoo easily heads the list of inexperienced leading ladies in which our stage has long been rich beyond compare, having played but seventeen nights and three matinées when she attracted the favorable notice of her manager. The company, which has been resting for the past fortnight, will resume its tour on Monday night in Altoona, the Athens of western Pennsylvania."

As the sick man listened to these brave words his eyes brightened and a wan smile played over his face, while his breathing became more even and his heart began to beat with renewed strength.

"He is saved!" cried the head nurse, as they laid him back on his pillow and turned their attention to the other sufferers.

It was with no small difficulty that a permit for a mass meeting in Union Square was obtained, the rumor having gone abroad that the anarchists were back of the movement and would boldly advocate the use of bombs in order to secure for themselves and their families a regular supply of dramatic news and criticisms. It was precisely at noon that the meeting was held, and as business by this time had come to an almost complete standstill, owing to the lack of criticism with which to lubricate the wheels of commerce, the attendance was enormous. A large force of uniformed police was present, while great numbers of ward-men, dressed in plain clothes, but easily recognized by experienced citizens by the size of their feet and the tenacity of their knuckles, permeated the crowd. It was in all respects an orderly gathering, one that sternly manifested its displeasure when a large delegation of anarchists arrived from the East Side bearing a red flag on which was printed:

"Give Us Our Dramatic Criticism!"

The offending banner having been removed by the police after a desperate struggle, the anarchists were permitted to remain and listen to, but take no part in, the proceedings. Meanwhile newsboys circulated freely among the crowd with copies of the *Evening Journal* containing a prayer for the higher dramatic criticism offered by the Rev. Thomas B. Gregory, who in his researches in Biblical history had come across the account of the manna falling in the desert, which he now printed as an exclusive news story.

The first speaker to address the meeting called attention to the great suffering entailed by the strike, and declared that it was the duty of the government to supply the people with criticisms and dramatic news, and that a large reservoir of such matter should be maintained so that the community could depend upon its regular supply of criticism on Tuesdays, items of news and theatrical scandals during the week, and a full page of these and other stage tit-bits on Sundays.

These remarks made a deep impression, as did the words of the next speaker, who boldly declared that not until the critics were elected directly by the people, like the mayor, the alderman, the district attorney, and other useful officials, could the community hope to have criticism of the people, by the people, and for the people.

At these ringing words the audience broke into a storm of vehement applause, which grew even louder when Emma Goldman was seen to mount the platform and raise her hand to command silence. Regardless of the uniformed police who surrounded her with drawn clubs, and undismayed by the warning words whispered in her ear by Commissioner Bingham, the brave lady-anarchist fearlessly lifted her voice in behalf of critical freedom.

"Why should we have any dramatic critics at all?" she demanded. "Why read their effusions when we can manufacture others quite as good in our own homes? Let us, therefore, seek to supply ourselves with dramatic paragraphs of domestic manufacture telling us about that awful season-closing plague, pneumonia, and its victims, and the fanatical religious zealots who will observe Lent this year until well into June!"

Her words fell upon the ears of the astounded citizens like a veritable thunder-clap. Strong men grew pale and turned to one another with questioning eyes, as if to say: "Can it be possible that these hitherto invaluable ministers to popular taste and intelligence can be done away with? Could we, too, learn to construct pleasing and illuminating paragraphs about the quiet domestic life of those peaceful little home bodies who brighten musical comedy with song and dance? Can our sons and daughters be taught to chronicle for use in our homes the social triumphs of the show girls who are pushed across the stage three or four times an evening in order that we may go home wiser, better, and happier men and women?"

Once more Emma Goldman raised her voice, and again the great General Bingham drew near and raised a warning finger.

"Listen to me, comrades," she said, and an awful silence fell upon the great multitude. "We have already passed through a Sunday of depression and misery which can only be likened to a Glasgow Sunday under

a prohibition law—were such a thing conceivable! You have seen your children crying for dramatic news, and you had none to give them! Are we to have another Sunday like this? No, I say to you, a thousand times, no! Take your torches and go to the headquarters of the Critics' Union, and there——"

"That will do!" said the commissioner sternly, and at a signal his minions pressed forward, the speaker was seized, and almost before the crowd realized what had happened she had been spirited away. Meanwhile a critic who had smuggled himself into the meeting in the disguise of an honest workingman, had started on a quick run for the union headquarters. There he found his comrades in consultation with the newspaper barons, who, having been thrown into convulsions of terror by the withdrawal of a six-line theatrical advertisement from one of the evening papers, had determined to end the strike at once, no matter at what cost to themselves. In a few moments the outcome of the public meeting had been made known to the members of the union, with the result that they made haste to agree to the terms offered by their former employers, which included the reengagement of the discharged critic and extra pay for all Ibsen matinées and entertainments given by pupils of schools of acting.

No sooner had the treaty of peace been signed than the members of the Lambs and Players gave expression to their delight by taking up a subscription with which to purchase a loving cup for Alan Dale. Then a representative of the theatrical managers association announced that ever since the expulsion of one of their members for alleged misrepresentation they had been conversing chiefly in monosyllables, but that they would contribute to the amity of the movement by presenting an intellectual drama of high literary quality that was absolutely certain to please the dramatic critics and nobody else.

And that night the critics were in their aisle seats at the various theaters, the town was settling down with a great gasp of relief to its usual routine, and here and there, at street corners and in cafés, groups of earnest citizens were shaking one another by the hand and lifting their glasses because the awful lockout was over.

# THE SALVATION OF CHRISTIANITY

BY THE REV. CHARLES F. AKED, D.D.

## IX. THE CHILD OF THE PROLETARIAT



**W**HETHER there be one God or three, no God or ten thousand, children must be fed and their bodies must be kept clean," says John Ruskin, voicing the sympathetic spirit of the nineteenth century which he did so much to foster and direct. "Must"—"must be fed: must be kept clean,"—there is an inexpugnable, unappeasable "ought"; we are coerced by the implacable despotism of our own humanity, and our theological beliefs or unbeliefs seem to possess no place in the discussion. Yet all the world knows or should know that the sentiment and the compulsion are alike the fruit of religion, that the passion of pity for the child is not social but religious, and that Ruskin and his rigor and his vigor are all the product of the Christian faith.

Among the Latin quotations which most of us have been able to bring up with us from our school days, there is one which rings with a sound of bigness and bravery. When it was spoken from the Roman stage, we are told, it never failed to arouse a cheer. And to this day, done to death as it is by repetition, no one can hear it without an answering throb of magnanimity. "I am a man, and nothing that pertains to man is indifferent to me"—it is magnificent, but on the lips of him that speaks it the sentence stands only for a revelation of the essential inhumanity of the old pagan world. For the father who has just spoken that swelling sentence, while the Roman mob roars its approval, has but now rebuked his wife for her

weakness is not killing the little girl baby whom he had commanded her to destroy as soon as born.

Had the dramatist intended to paint a loathsome hypocrite, speaking magniloquent words and doing vile deeds, there would be no more to say. But Terence meant nothing of the kind. To this father, a female child was nothing. Let it be killed as soon as born! It was not included in that "which pertains to man." And so there was no inconsistency between the boasted humanity and a soulless indifference to the helpless infant's fate.

The exposure and abandonment of children newly born was one of the commonest features of Roman social life—where murder was not practiced outright. The child was taken out after dark and quietly set down near the Lactarian column, under the pitiless skies. The words of Ovid have often been quoted. The first day of the new-born babe was its last, unless it was seized in time by one of the crowd of harpies, witches, and agents of slave dealers who flitted about in the night seeking these unfortunate little ones to train them up for the worst of purposes. Seneca, author of the masterly books on "Anger," calmly says: "The poor man raises his sons, but daughters, if one is poor, we expose." And he goes on to explain: "Monstrous offspring we destroy; children, too, if weak and unnaturally formed from birth, we drown." And the shrinking of spirit with which we hear these things marks the influence of Christianity upon the civilization of the world.

Many standards have been proposed by

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which to gauge the civilization to which an age or country has attained. One, at least, will not fail—its treatment of the child. The Hebrew prophet, dreaming of the good time coming, saw that the streets of Jerusalem should be full of boys and girls playing there—boys and girls *playing*; it strikes a note somewhat different from the “children weeping” of our modern seer, “weeping in the playtime of the others, in the country of the free.”

One of the nearest, most immediate duties of the Christian Church in this land, a duty which brooks no delay and tolerates no indifference, is to change the “children weeping,” toiling, slaving, dying under the hideous demands for child labor in our time, into the “children playing” of Zechariah’s vision.

For let there be no mistake about the facts: we are disgraced by the exploitation of the child in the supposed interest of wealth. There is no other word which is fitting. The measure of child labor is the measure of our shame. And there is no Christian man or woman between the Atlantic and the Pacific who ought not to feel the sting and the shame and the disgrace of it, except as each one has delivered himself from reproach by earnest and continuous effort to get the big, black wrong put right. Christianity is nothing if it is not philanthropic. The Church which does not care for the child is not a Church of Christ. And one of the really hopeful things in the life of this nation to-day is the determination of religious people to end conditions which can only be described as infamous.

The beginnings of child labor in this country as now practiced, and the early history of it, are worth telling over again, though it cannot be attempted here. The essential thing is to note the fact that in the evolution of American industrialism and commerce this great, proud, and free people in the twentieth century is repeating the errors and scandals and crimes of Great Britain in the eighteenth, which the nineteenth set itself to reform and to reform out of existence, and on which the twentieth looks back with shame and sorrow. That cannot be a pleasing reflection to an American Christian, but it is true. And it should goad the most apathetic into activity.

One of the stories of horror which British people read in the “annals of the poor”

of their own country is that of the little boys who a century ago sat by the ventilating shafts in the coal mines. Poor little fellows of seven or nine years of age sat in the dreary dark corridor of the mine, waiting, in the silence and in the darkness which could be felt, for the faint rumbling of the oncoming trolley of coal. As it approached, they opened the door, let it through, closed the door, listened to its rumbling die away in the distance, and then sat, lonely, fearful, in the black, black depths and Egyptian darkness till they heard the next load on its way.

It will be difficult for any reader of these lines to conceive the shock, the sense of personal humiliation, with which the writer discovered that the child is still sitting by the ventilating door of the coal mine, waiting for the rumbling of the trolley, waiting in the loneliness and the fear, waiting in the wet, in the mud, with the rats, beneath the very ground on which our feet are walking in this country of the free, while the Stars and Stripes floats over us and we glory in our time.

At first—if a personal reference may be permitted for the sake of emphasis—the writer declined to believe the stories which were told in England of American labor conditions. He was in the home of an English labor leader, a distinguished member of the House of Commons. He was on the eve of saying farewell to his native land and coming to make a home in one which he believed to be many generations ahead of Great Britain in those virtues to the advocacy of which he had given the best part of his life for twenty years. And when he boasted of the land to which he was coming, the English M.P. said, “Labor conditions are worse in America than in England. Child labor is damnable. They are a hundred years behind the time,” and the writer laughed the suggestion to scorn. He was advised to read Mr. Spargo’s book, “The Bitter Cry of the Children.” He read it, and declined to accept Mr. Spargo as a witness of truth, at least, as a witness of all the truth which should be told on the subject. There were explanations, reservations, contradictions—something, somewhere: these things were impossible!

Alas! these things are true; and though it is the case that there are “explanations”

and that these modify in a way the sentence of condemnation which an outsider would pronounce, knowing little or nothing of the historical causes which have brought us to this pass and of the constitutional and other difficulties which make progress slow, and knowing nothing except by hearsay of that strange contempt for law which is one of the most fantastic and wonderful things in the life of America, none the less the facts are there, and all the "explanations" in the world cannot explain them away.

Here in West Virginia is a boy of about fifteen who says that he has been "trapping" (opening the ventilation door as described) for several years. Here is another who looks about thirteen who has been at work for three years. Here is another who does not seem to be more than twelve, but the foreman says he has been trapping for six years. And the law of the state provides that a boy cannot work in a mine until he is fourteen years old! In one place a trapper was asked how often he had to open the door in a day. He replied that sometimes it was a dozen, sometimes fifty—the remainder of the time he sat idle. Work begins at seven in the morning; it ends at five-thirty in the evening. Think of the ghastly monotony of that idleness in the darkness of the mine!

In the Anthracite region of Pennsylvania it is believed that there are more than ten thousand boys under the legal age of fourteen employed in defiance of the law. And life is appallingly cheap. The report of the Chief of the Department of Mines shows that in a recent year the proportion of children employed in slate picking was forty-eight per cent of the whole number; but the proportion of boys killed was seventy-five per cent of the total deaths. That is to say, with practically equal numbers of boys and men employed, three boys were killed for one man. It is not strange. In the mysterious providence of nature it has been ordained that boys will be boys! Boyish irresponsibility, inattention, that which makes and keeps a boy a boy, exposes him to the full force of those "accidents" which constitute themselves very often a reproach to our humanity.

In a single year, in these mines, one hundred and thirty English-speaking miners were killed and three hundred and twenty-six non-English-speaking. The disproportion

tion of nationalities was not nearly so great. The excessive number of deaths among the foreigners is easily accounted for. Not familiar with our tongue, they did not as quickly grasp the meaning of orders given them, or directions, or warning. It will be seen at a glance how this affects the boys. Their lives are attacked on both sides. They are working when they ought to be at school. They have no chance of learning. They are the easy victims, as they may be the unconscious cause, of these shameful "accidents."

We ought to know what this work really is. For some years the writer was employed in a clerical capacity in and about mines, and he was frequently underground. Later, he ministered in a collier town, and learned something more of the miner's life. But the first-hand testimony of Mr. Spargo may be cited to greater advantage. He tried the work, and he tells his experience:

Work in the coal breakers is exceedingly hard and dangerous. Crouched over the chutes, the boys sit hour after hour, picking out the pieces of slate and other refuse from the coal as it rushes past to the washers. From the cramped position they have to assume, most of them become more or less deformed and bent-backed like old men. When a boy has been working for some time and begins to get round-shouldered, his fellows say that "he's got his boy to carry round wherever he goes." The coal is hard, and accidents to the hands, such as cut, broken, or crushed fingers, are common among the boys. Sometimes there is a worse accident: a terrified shriek is heard, and a boy is mangled and torn in the machinery, or disappears in the chute to be picked out later smothered and dead. Clouds of dust fill the breakers and are inhaled by the boys, laying the foundations for asthma and miners' consumption. I once stood in a breaker for half an hour and tried to do the work a twelve-year-old boy was doing day after day, for ten hours at a stretch, for sixty cents a day. The gloom of the breaker appalled me. Outside the sun shone brightly, the air was pellucid, and the birds sang in chorus with the trees and rivers. Within the breaker there was blackness, clouds of deadly dust enfolded everything, the harsh, grinding roar of the machinery and the ceaseless rushing of coal through the chutes filled the ears. I tried to pick out the pieces of slate from the hurrying stream of coal, often

missing them; my hands were bruised and cut in a few minutes; I was covered from head to foot with coal dust, and for many hours afterwards I was expectorating some of the small particles of anthracite I had swallowed.

There is danger that the city dweller should delude himself with the assurance that these horrors belong to remote regions, and to states which do not measure up to his ideal of civilization. The city dweller must not chloroform his soul with any such nonsense. Mr. Spargo is responsible for the statement that there are over five hundred canning factories in New York State, and though the census of 1900 gives the number of children under sixteen employed in them as two hundred and nineteen, the agent of the New York Child-Labor Committee was told by the foreman of one factory that there were three hundred children under fourteen employed in that one place. In New York City there are many thousands of "home factories," that is to say, groups of workers in the tenements licensed to manufacture goods. How difficult it is to protect children employed in these tenements can best be judged by an incident which Mr. Spargo relates:

Two small Italian children, a boy of five and his sister aged four, left a West Side kindergarten and were promptly followed up by their kindergartner, who found that the children were working and could not, in the opinion of their mother, be spared to attend the kindergarten. They were both helping to make artificial flowers. The truant officer was first applied to and asked whether the compulsory education law could not be used to free them, part of the time at least, from their unnatural toil. But attendance at school is not compulsory before the eighth year, so that was a useless appeal. Then the factory inspector was applied to, and he showed that the work of the children was entirely legal; they received no wages and were, therefore, not "employed" in the technical sense of that term. They were working in their own family. The room was not dirty or excessively overcrowded. No law was broken, and there was no legal means whereby the enslavement of those little children might be prevented.

The Commissioner of Labor for New York State in his bulletin dated March,

1907, reports an investigation of tenement-house labor in certain streets in New York City. In seven streets visited there were found one hundred and ninety-three children engaged in such toil as the manufacture of clothing, artificial flowers, etc. These children ranged from five to fourteen years of age. There were, as a matter of fact, four children only five years old, eight who were only six, twenty who were seven—and so the story runs. What this means an investigator must be allowed to tell. Dr. Annie S. Daniel is an observer whose sympathies have not been allowed to run away with her sense of accuracy and her judgment. It will still be news to many deeply religious people that these things can be said of New York:

The workers, poor, helpless, ignorant foreigners, toil on in dirt, often in filth unspeakable, in the presence of all contagious and other diseases, and in apartments in which the sun enters only at noon or never at all. The tenement-house department states that there are thousands of apartments in which all rooms open on an air shaft; in such an apartment I attended a woman ill with tuberculosis, finishing trousers. During the summer, and then only for about two hours, daylight (not sunlight) came in. This daylight lasted two months, and for this place of three air-shaft rooms ten dollars per month was paid. Three years of life in this apartment killed the woman. The finishers are made up of the old and the young, the sick and the well. As soon as a little child can be of the least possible help, it must add to the family income by taking a share in the family toil.

A child three years old can straighten out tobacco leaves or stick the rims which form the stamens of artificial flowers through the petals. He can put the covers on paper boxes at four years. He can do some of the pasting of paper boxes, although, as a rule, this requires a child of six to eight years. But from four to six years he can sew on buttons and pull basting threads. A girl from eight to twelve can finish trousers as well as her mother. After she is twelve, if of good size, she can earn more money in a factory. The boys do practically the same work as the girls, except that they leave the housework earlier, and enter street work, as peddlers, boot-blacks, and newsboys.

The sick, as long as they can hold their heads up, must work to pay for the cost of their living. As soon as they are convalescent they must begin

again. The other day a girl of eight years was dismissed from the diphtheria hospital after a severe attack of the disease. Almost immediately she was working at women's collars, although scarcely able to walk across the room alone.

Of the extent of child labor in the United States it is difficult to form an estimate which is not open to challenge. The official figures are easily grasped, but nobody whom the writer has met or corresponded with, and none of the authorities he has consulted, believes for a moment that the official figures reveal anything like the true facts. But, such as they are, the statistics tell a terrible story. In 1900 there were a million and three quarters of the children of the country employed as breadwinners. It must be said that a million of them were employed in agricultural pursuits where, to be sure, the conditions are not so frightful. But nearly three quarters of a million remained, imprisoned in mines, factories, mills, sweat shops, and the like. During the years 1880-1900 the evil had been increasing. Still following the official figures, the population of the United States increased 50.6 per cent, but the number of children employed in remunerative toil increased 56.5 per cent. The indications point to an increase since 1900. An official estimate for 1906 places the number of working children between ten and fifteen years of age at 1,939,524, as against 1,750,178 in 1900. If the illustration of the one canning factory which had three hundred children illegally employed goes for anything at all, the numbers actually employed must be terribly in excess of those embraced by the official figures. From Tennessee, and Alabama, and Virginia, and Kentucky, from woolen mills, and cigar factories, and glass factories, and silk mills, and from the mines, from the manufacturing cities of New England, from the sweat shops and the tenements and the streets of the proud city of New York, comes the bitter cry of the children. And the churches must have no rest while that cry rises in their ears day and night.

Child labor dooms the child to illiteracy. Some states are without compulsory education laws, and, needless to say, in many places where such laws exist they are not

enforced. The illiterate man grows up to be a wastrel, a charge upon the body politic. In this country at least there is no need to argue the necessity of education, not to the individual merely, but to the state. From this country have shone forth high examples of devotion to education from which all the world has been gainer. Men who are at the present moment engaged in the struggle to complete British liberties, and with that end in view are fighting the education battle in the old world, visit these shores and return to cite on a hundred platforms the educational system and the educational ideals of America. On two things the educator has insisted: that education is to make the man a better mechanic, and make the mechanic a better man; that education is to give a person the means of living, and to open to him the meaning of life. And the ideal of an educational ladder with its lowest rungs in the kindergarten and its highest in the university has appealed to the imagination of every civilized state. Child labor flies in the face of every such ideal and every such hope. It is from the beginning unAmerican. It strikes at that which is dearest to the American mind and most characteristic of the American spirit.

Child labor dooms the child and the man after him to poverty. Those of us who had the advantage of sitting at the feet of Gladstone while we were very young learned from him in our impressionable years that "that which is morally wrong can never be politically right." Shall we need to argue in this day that what is morally unsound can never be economically sound? From any point of view, from that of the individual or from that of the community, it is wretchedly bad economics to put the child to labor so soon. Without the basis of education he remains all his life an incompetent worker. He does, also, the poorest sort of work and he does it badly. There is no sort of work which it is wiser to do badly than to do well. The roughest and coarsest and meanest tasks, if they have to be discharged at all, are better done skillfully than unskillfully. Is it not on record that the man who tried the life of culture and the life of manual toil declared that it took him six months to learn Greek and two years to learn to plow?

If the unconfessed idea of child labor

were to breed up a race of servile laborers for servile tasks it would still be a mistake. Competent slaves would be worth more than incompetent any day. The man who was sent to labor in the mills and mines as a child remains to the end of his days a poor producer, a poor earner, and therefore a drag upon society. It has been ascertained by careful investigators that at eighteen years of age children who go to work at twelve or fourteen have earned less than those who started at sixteen. It is precisely what one would expect. The man who has missed proper training is out of the race.

Child labor dooms the laborer to physical degeneracy. The legislation of Great Britain in its efforts to care for the child has not been quoted because it by no means follows that what is necessary in one country is adapted to the needs of another. But if this country be proudly unwilling to copy the example of Great Britain in her philanthropy or her magnanimity, this country should also be proudly unwilling to follow the road to ruin from which she is now seeking to turn back. One scarcely cares to call back to recollection the revelations of physical degeneracy in England made during her war with the South African Republics. Indeed, if one were to quote only the words of the Blue Book issued by the British Government, without comment of any character, using no language but the language of the commission appointed by the Government, he would be accused of making insulting references to the mother-country.

A single notorious fact may be mentioned again and the implications of that fact need not be labored. In the year 1899 a record was kept in the city of Manchester of the rejections by the recruiting officers as well as by the doctors of men offering themselves for the army, and it was found that of eleven thousand who presented themselves for enlistment eight thousand were rejected as physically unfit. The child labor of the mills and of the mines in days gone by had produced its baneful effects in the physical degeneracy of great masses of English men.

Do we want to produce the same results here? We are going the right way about it. An imperial race, we have been told, is not bred in slums. The rookeries of our

great cities, the hovels to which in remoter places we condemn the wastrel poor, the "breakers" of the coal mines, the glass factories and the canning factories to which we send our little ones, are no place in which to nurture a world-conquering race like our own, great in its initiative, its audacity, its self-reliance, its inventive and creative genius. If America had no pity on the child, which to one who knows the heart of America is inconceivable, then America might have some pity on herself.

Child labor dooms the child laborer to moral degeneracy. Amidst such conditions as those in which the child is reared no human being would expect him to grow up sweet of nature, pure of soul. It would be difficult to discuss the actual facts. There are certain things which ought not to be said in a magazine which goes into respectable homes. Men and women of the world have not to give very free play to their imagination to know what language is likely to be used amidst such scenes, what deeds are likely to be done. There are some terrible lines of Tennyson's which alone seem adequate:

Is it well that while we range with Science,  
glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense  
in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts  
on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the  
thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress  
tress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and  
the dead.

There the smoldering fire of fever creeps across  
the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens  
of the poor.

The last few years have seen a great awakening of the public conscience and the addition of restrictive laws to the statute book of every state in the Union except one. In the legislative sessions of 1906-7 eighteen states enacted new laws or revised old ones. In the early part of 1908 the legisla-



tures of many other states were busy with the problem. More and better laws are still required. The ideal statute has not yet been written into the life of any state. Yet there is much good law, if only—the *if* is tremendous—we could get it enforced.

It is difficult for one who is to the manner born to understand how these things strike a newcomer. What has already been called a "fantastic contempt for law" passes all belief. Prior to actual knowledge it is inconceivable. Some wrong calls for redress. Feeling is aroused. "Go to, now," we say to one another, "let us make a law." We make one—or twenty—or a hundred; the number is nothing. Law-making is easy; it is even amusing. And like the man who thinks he is thinking and remains a menace to anything like thought, we believe that we have done something; we go our way, forget all about it, and the law is never heard of again.

The inspection of mines is, from the child's point of view, almost a farce. It is a farce at which nobody can laugh. In Pennsylvania there is an average of forty-five mines to one inspector. If that inspector was the wisest man on earth, the most energetic and industrious, and the most incorruptible, the position would still be idiotic. In many places there is no machinery for the proper enforcement of the law. There is no fund to be appealed to for the cost of enforcement. There is no sentiment which demands its enforcement. The capitalists are not the only sinners, the foremen are not the chief criminals. The parents do their very utmost to dodge the law; they lie about the age of their children; when necessary they make false affidavits; they procure certificates by perjury. Sometimes the children like it; in their ignorance they think it "manly" to escape school and go to work.

But a great people will not forever allow its sympathy, its beneficence, its common sense, and all its instincts of greatness to be reduced to utter futility by all the mill owners and mine owners and foremen and parents and stupid children in the land. The action of the courts needs to be strengthened, but the supreme court to which appeal must be made is that which sits enthroned in the enlightened conscience of the American people. It is for the churches to do more than they have yet

done in the dissemination of knowledge, the creation of opinion, and the awakening of the soul of the nation. The president of Brown University—whom the writer quotes with peculiar pleasure—in his Yale lectures on Preaching just issued, declares:

The average church member knows nothing about the enormous evils of child labor in America. He would eagerly offer personal ministrations to one little child that he had discovered on the curbstone or in a cellar. But the children that toil all night in the cotton mills, the little boys that run to and fro to escape the molten masses in the glass factory—of them he knows little or nothing. He still lives in the region of individualistic ethics and sporadic charity. But if the facts regarding child labor in this country could be set vividly before the average church, and the church could be really instructed as to what has been done and should be done to change them, each church would at once become a regiment of crusaders. At present our churches have remained apathetic, merely because untaught. A ministry which has nothing to say regarding the crushing out of young life in this country by the industrial Moloch is surely a somnolent affair.

If Dr. Faunce's charge of ignorance is true, the preachers of this country stand condemned. And if the churches of this country are losing ground, then, on the hypothesis that Dr. Faunce's charge can be sustained, they ought to lose ground. If "the average church member knows nothing about the enormous evils of child labor," then the average minister in this country has not done his duty. And while he remains "a blind leader of the blind," "a dumb dog that cannot bark," and "a watchman on the walls that sounds no alarm," the churches will continue to lose place and power. What are churches for? We keep on asking the question. And we *must* keep on asking the question. We had better have no church than a church which by its silence consents to iniquity. The churches are only worth saving as they show themselves saviors. We have agreed in this day that it is not enough to save souls; we have to save society. The city is to be saved, the state, the nation. And we need not think we can begin our saving work by dooming and destroying the child.



## WHEN BLINKER FELL DOWN

By ROY NORTON



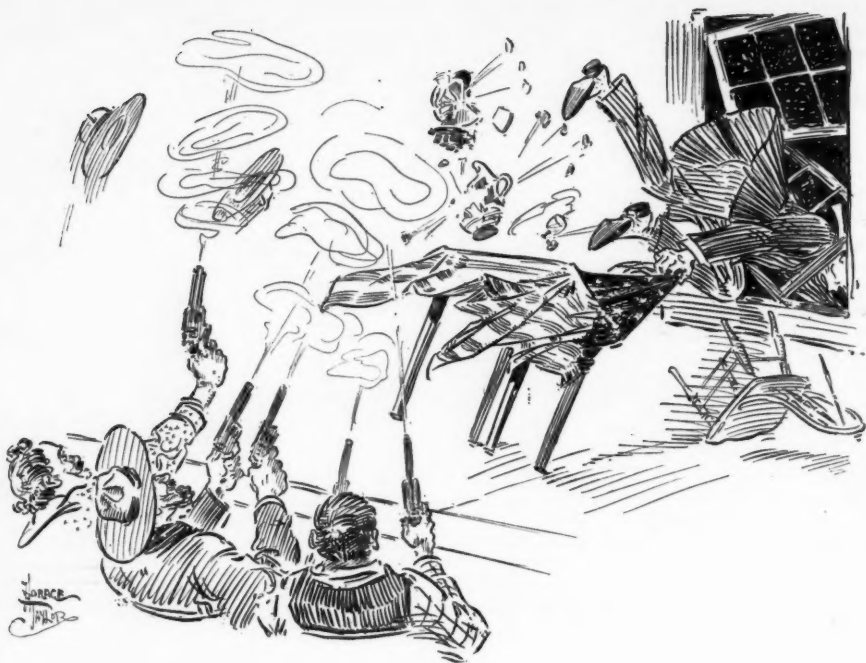
**T**HAT was twelve years ago, but even now I can close my eyes and feel the rasp of those cinders as I plowed across the right of way just beyond the Silver City depot.

Silver City had run along pretty well without any politics up to this time, inasmuch as we were in a Territory, where you don't get a chance to be a citizen and exercise the glorious right of suffrage, unless it's for coroner or some other job nobody wants. But now we were a State and were going to throw in our weight and make a president. The whole United States had her eyes trustingly on Silver City, so Blink said, and we felt the responsibility of showing 'em down East that we knew a thing or two.

Blinker Murphy was the whole thing

in the game, because he had once been a ward man in New York. That is a kind of a Tammany leadership, we thought from what Blink told us. Anyhow, we had sense enough to know that if we did politics we'd have to have a boss to steer us right, so Blink got the job.

About all we knew of the game was what Blink told us. You see there were a lot of fellows down on Wall Street who were going to stack the deck on us fellows in Silver City and take our rolls—put us out of business. Were just naturally going to make silver so cheap that you couldn't pack enough to buy a drink. Of course we wouldn't stand for that. Blink said we'd make the Gold Standard gang look like a lot of hungry Piutes if we all stood pat and put up enough. We stood and put all right, and I reckon we'd have saved the country if it hadn't been for an accident.



*"What he couldn't get over he went through."*

To show you how important we were about this time, these fellows on Wall Street sent a heap-big-injun-with-the-long-tongue over from Frisco to tell us how it should be done. We weren't much in the talk line, it being pretty good policy in our country to keep your opinions to yourself unless you were hunting for trouble and a pretty good shot. So we all went up to the Miners' Hall to hear what this fellow had to say.

He ambled out on the platform, cleared his throat a few times, and took a couple of drinks of water. That showed us what he was all right!

The water went to this fellow's head, I guess. He came over to the front and pulled a long, cheerful, patronizing grin. Then he said: "I was told when I came to Silver City that I was coming into the hot-bed of free silver. I didn't expect to see

an intelligent looking lot of men on that account. I expected to see a mob of long-haired, unwashed, unkempt loafers, anarchists at heart, and ready to crucify their country. But I am——"

That's as far as he got! Al Swift turned loose a forty-five that smashed the water pitcher on the stand, and some of the other boys took pot shots at the lamps. The meeting quit all of a sudden, and the stranger hit the back window like a mad steer taking a five-bar gate. What he couldn't get over he went through.

Well, that set the United States to thinking a bit. They decided to make another try, however. Things went well until along up to near election time, and then that eastern gang pasted bills up all over the camp, saying that "The Hon. Alexis McNutt, the world-renowned spellbinder from South Dakota, will address the citi-

zens of Silver City on the fallacies of Free Silver." The bills were pictures showing the honorable Alec, and underneath was a little hot air about how great a talker he was.

There had been such a howl raised in the eastern papers about how uncivilized we were, in the handling of the first talk man, that Blink called us all in and said it wouldn't go with this fellow. Whether we liked his line of talk or not, we had to keep from shooting the hall up. That's where Blink made a mistake.

Along about this time, Bill Bevins floats in from Boomer Camp over the range. Bill can't read, having been too busy following cows and digging holes all his life to learn any frivolous accomplishments. The minute he saw one of these pictures he fairly rolls over on the ground.

"What you doin' with Hank Summers's

picture stuck up all over Silver?" he says to Blink and me.

We didn't tumble for a while, then finds out there's a fellow called Hank Summers over in Boomer you couldn't tell apart from the Hon. Alec. McNutt. That set Blink to thinking, and the result was he and I went over to Boomer to see this Hank. We found him all right, and that he was a free silver man from away back. And to tell the truth he did look like Alec.

That was the beginning of the play which was to settle the Wall Street gang's aspirations to give their man the job of being president. Blink and me fixed it up with Hank that he was to get a white shirt and silk hat and borrow an undertaker's coat, and show up in Silver just in time to speak. Then with a few of the boys, including the town marshal, we were going to rope this McNutt man, throw him in



"Bands didn't grow on sagebrush in our country."



*"There sat Hank, cool as a frozen dog."*

the calaboose until the next train went out, and thus keep him from coddling any of the boys over to his side of the fence. In the meantime Hank would get himself up a good line of talk about saving the country by voting for the free and unlimited coinage of silver, hand it out in big chunks at the Miners' Hall, and tear back home. We calculated that would fix the Gold Standard business with a ten-inch spike for good and all.

Of course we weren't going to let any more of our crowd into the play than we could help, so we only told three or four and then passed the next few days patting each other on the back and spending Blink's campaign fund.

When the train pulled in on the night of the speech everything was on the hum. This McNutt came, but he didn't come alone. He had a marching club—so they called it—from somewhere or another, about fifty men with torches and red fire layouts. Then they had a right good band of seven or eight men that made noise enough for an army. The Hon. Mack was escorted to his hotel, after which the

marching club and the band did the town. Blink and all the rest of us had met them at the station and followed up to the hotel, not because we wanted to see McNutt, but because we wanted to hear the band play. Bands didn't grow on sagebrush in our country and a little A 1-brand of music does a fellow good once in a while. It's like a rattler in your blankets—makes your blood sprint a bit.

While the band was playing down in front of George Emory's saloon, and the marching club was doing a few fancy curves, Blink and me and the gang hung around the hotel waiting for the Hon. Alexis McNutt to come out. He showed up finally, silk hat and all, and stood on the steps picking his teeth and giving folks a chance to admire him. We made a bolt for him, and before he knew what was up we had him in an alley. It was well done, too! Blink had him from behind with a kind of new twist. Had his hand over the Hon. Mack's mouth so he couldn't yell to his pals. Guess New York politics must be a great school for shutting a man's wind off quick, if that's where Blink got his education. Anyway, Blink must have worked in dark alleys before.

Well, we trussed this boy up like a bale of hay, gagged him with a handkerchief and slid him into the jug. Then we went back to watch Hank work. We wandered into the hotel and rubbered through the glass door leading into the dining room, and, would you believe it?—there sat Hank, cool as a frozen dog, stowing away food and being admired by the public that was gawking round with us. He wasn't going to make any free silver speech until he got away with the fodder stacked up for Alexis McNutt.

"The gall of him," says Blink, winking at me and pulling my arm to get me away from the fascinating sight of Hank Summers wallowing in fried tripe and other delicacies.

Just then we heard loud cheers out in front and ran to see what the row was. There on the steps, in the shadow of the door lamp, stood the Hon. A. McNutt, silk hat and all as usual, bowing to an admiring mob composed of some of his marching crowd and a lot of suckers of Silver City who didn't know what was good for them in the voting line.





*"All silk bats look alike to me."*

"No speeches now," said the genial McNutt. "Not now, my friends. You'll get a speech in the hall in a short time and then you'll know how to vote and save your country and the glory of these here United States."

That got them all right. They nearly howled themselves to death, the band hit up something that Blink said was "See the Conquered Hero," and the spellbinder, smiling and bowing, backed into the hotel.

"Well, I'll be—" said Blink in my ear, in a kind of mysterious, surprised, hurt way. "Bill," says he, "we got a traitor in de camp. Some guy's turned that cuss loose again. We got ter cop him dis time and take him up to your shack. See?"

There wasn't much time to lose, so we got the marshal to do the hurry-up stunt. He walked over to the renowned mut from Dakota, sort of threw his chest out so as to show his star and says, "My friend, I want to speak to you privately."

Alexis took it easy and looked the marshal up and down from his Stetson to

his cowhides. "Are you an officer?" he asks.

"Sure! I'm the marshal."

"Git onto de star!" says Blink, butting in without clearing his throat, and Blink was always hoarse. "Git onto de star!"

"Well, I'm glad to meet you," says Alexis, and we knew he must be going to lodge a kick about what we'd done to him earlier in the evening. Thought he hadn't liked the way we handled him. The marshal was game, though, because he knew he was saving the country, so he insisted on having McNutt come out back of the hotel to talk.

We got out where there was no company but a few heaps of ashes and a pile of tin cans, and then we grabbed him again. How he did fight and gurgel!

"Hold on! Hold on! You've got the wrong man! Let me go!"

Did we let go? Nixey! He put up a bully fight this time, and it was a good thing there were three of us. He kept yelling as he fought, "I'll fix you for this, you cutthroats!" and finally got so loud

we were afraid to take any more chances. So we shut his wind off until we could get a bit in his mouth which was nicely tied with a handkerchief around his head. We didn't take any more chances on the calaboose, but just naturally toted him off to my cabin, slammed him on the bunk, took a few timber hitches around him with a rope and told him to be careful in the future not to shoot his gab too much, or we'd show him and his Wall Street bunch a few new lines of work.

Oh—we had a good time with that boy all right! We sat around and jollied him a while, passing a few facetious remarks on politics in the West and the free and unlimited coinage of silver. He didn't make a move. Just lay there and glared at us. In fact, he wasn't hooked up where he could say much, come to think of it.

We blew the candle out and hit the trail for the hall to hear Hank Summers make

his little speech. We could hear them cheering and yelling long before we got near it, and knew Hank had them all with him and won over to our side.

"Good old Hank!" says Blink. "He's sure talkin' his head off." Then we all three laughed for joy. It was so good a joke that we stopped, before we got to the hall, to take a few refreshments. Then we took a few more. Then the clock commenced to go around, and before we ever got time to go over to hear Hank's line of work it was quitting time. We got there, though, after several more stops on the route, and edged our way to where we could see inside. Say—he had them for fair! They were shrieking themselves to pieces. We didn't get to hear much of it, for in about a minute the whole crowd stood on their chairs, waved their hats and tried to raise the roof with lung power. And above all this hullabaloo the band



"The marching club fellows looked disappointed."

hit her up again for all it was worth on that charming, soulful little ditty called "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night." It was well selected, because you can bet there was!

But now we were up against another difficulty. When Hank came out through the crowd the marching club formed around him, with the band in front. Some of the boys had taken the horses off Kelly's buckboard, which was a sort of state-occasion chariot, and were pulling Hank away to the station where the special train was waiting to take all the visitors away to their happy homes.

"Bill," said Blink to me, in a hoarse yell so he could be heard above all the noise, "if we don't butt in some way, dis bunch'll kidnap Hank Summers and he'll be in a fix when dey gits wise. We got ter save him some way from dis Wall Street gang."

It did look a little tough for Hank, and Blink's face turned green, although there was a heap of red fire lighting it up. For the life of me I couldn't see how we were to get Hank away. I couldn't think of anything unless it was to wreck the train, which might have been about as bad for Hank as for the Gold Standard boys to discover who he was. Then again a fellow might dynamite the engine where she stood, so she couldn't pull out until the next day. But it was a cinch we couldn't save Hank by force.

Blink was the intelligent buck, though, who thought the way out. He waited till the conductor was about ready to give his lantern a swing, then jumped into the train with me after him. We found Hank in a seat with two or three fellows around him, and Blink took off his hat and says, "Mr. McNutt, won't you come forward to de next car where de boys wants to talk at you a little?"

As we started down the aisle the train commenced to move, the boys outside were letting off their guns to show how hilarious they were, and there was a general all 'round, free-for-all noise. No one paid any attention to us, and we made it out to the platform between the cars, just as she was getting well under way.

"Jump, Hank! Off de dark side—quick!" yells Blink. "We'll save you."

But Hank didn't want to be saved. He

seemed a trifle dazed and showed lack of understanding as if his head had been turned by the night's ovation. Blinker and me see how it was and that he couldn't understand, so we both grabbed him and jumped.

Cinders? Say—hell ain't got more cinders in it than we had in us when we stopped rolling and tumbling and spinning, and came to a stop, all three of us scattered along the right of way, sitting straight up and rubbing sore spots. And while we sat there the train pulled off into the night, still giving us occasional sounds of "A Hot Time in the Old Town." Our friend woke up first, but instead of thanking us for hauling him off, suddenly let out a yell like a Comanche, got to his legs, and dizzily sprinted for the crowd on the platform. Blink and I first thought Hank had gone for first aid to the wounded. Then we began to come to.

In a minute the boys on the platform tore over to where we were, bringing a few station lanterns with them and a torch or two which they had thoughtfully preserved as relics of the marching club. We were glad to see the boys, because now was the time we were to explain the joke. They helped us to our feet, and took us over to Kelly's place near the depot. That struck us as funny, because Kelly was the boss of the opposition. A rank Gold Standard man.

When we got inside there was a woe-begone figure with a piece of silk hat sticking on its head, and a skinned cheek full of cinders.

"They are the men," he yelled, shaking his fist at us. "They are the men. I demand their arrest. They assaulted me—pulled me off the train and tried to murder me. I won't stand for it. Arrest 'em!"

"Oh—come off, Hank," began Blinker. "What's de matter wid youse?" But it didn't work the way we expected.

"Don't you call me Hank," snarled our supposed friend. "You address me by my right name—Alexis McNutt!"

Blink and me looked at each other in a daze. Then everyone tried to talk at once, and we weren't favorites any longer. McNutt could spellbind all right, and he had the whole show with him. It came over us good and strong that we had got the

wrong man, somehow, and Hank must be in my shack, and the speech had come off just as billed and had won everything before it for the Gold Standard boys.

"Bill," says Blink when he could make himself heard, "I guess we better go up to your diggin's and turn Hank loose. He's probably some tired by dis time."

Would they let us go alone? Not on your life! They went along and cussed us all the way. When we got there our man was still on the bed with the bit in his teeth, and gibbering like a tongue-tied maniac. The first thing he did when he got the use of his jaw was to join the cussing party, and he had quite a little to say. To tell the truth I don't see how we could have made such a mistake, because when he stood up alongside McNutt they didn't look very much alike. But we hadn't had a very good look at the "World Renowned," before we kidnaped this fellow—and—well, all silk hats look alike to me.

"I'm the newly appointed United States District Attorney," he said, "and just took advantage of this special train to come here." He turned and shook his fist at Blink and me, and all the yelling the spell-binder had done was a gentle whisper beside what Mr. Guy Shoup ladled out to us. It came in chunks and sputtered sparks like a smelter stack. He wasn't satisfied with having us, and wanted to get his hooks on our partner, the marshal, also. Blink and I kept quiet.

Just about then there was a whistle, and here came that train back. They had missed the Hon. Alexis, and came in a body to find him. Things began to look real warm and uncomfortable. They wanted to hang Blink and me, and started a "Button, button—who's got the button" game to see which one could first find a rope.

But I'll say this for the District Attorney: he stood out against hanging, and McNutt backed him up. They were a hot pair of defenders, though—one in a silk-hat

brim, his clothes in rags and his face full of cinders, and the other nearly as ragged and with a black eye like a cocoanut that some of us had handed him back of the hotel. But they made good, and there wasn't any hanging. The marching club fellows looked disappointed, because I don't think they really liked Blink and me.

Everybody hit it off to the calaboose with us, and now there was light a-plenty as the torches were all lighted and the gang all with us. Blink, between two big huskies who held his arms, had the nerve to grin over at me and yell, "Bill, me boy, we didn't go for to lead a torchlight procession, did we? Wouldn't it smoke youse!"

Not having found the marshal, who is probably running yet, they had to open the jail with the mayor's key, and then they found poor old Hank. Yes, it was him all right! The great big stiff had got in the way, and we had collared him in the alley before he had a chance to say a word. And we weren't so much to blame with him either, because he was a ringer for the Hon. Alexis McNutt.

Hank had a lot to say, too, but his explanations didn't get much sympathy. The last I saw of him he was bumping along like a football, with every other man taking a kick at him. He was glad to get off alive and seek the simple life over at Boomer, I guess. Anyway, we never heard any more of him.

Well, the first job Mr. Guy Shoup, U. S. District Attorney, Esquire, had in that hump of the hills, was to soak it to Blink and me good and strong. The way he prosecuted us was shameful!

The things he said about us to the jury turned our hair gray, the insinuations he made couldn't be printed, and what he wanted done to us would have made an Apache torture look like a peace conference. We got six months in that measly little coop, and that's why Wall Street won the fight.



# MY STORY

By HALL CAINE

## VIII. MANX NOVELS AND PLAYS



HAD written two novels with their scenes in Cumberland, my mother's country, before I thought of carrying out the suggestion of Rossetti that I should try to become the novelist of Manxland. But now I began to see how readily the island lent itself to literary treatment, not merely for its own sake, but also for the sake of those great themes of human sin and sorrow which are never so well illustrated as when brought down to a little scene, a narrow focus, from the general to the particular. So I went with my project of becoming a Manx novelist to consult a famous Manxman of his day, the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown.

Brown disapproved of it altogether. "Don't attempt it," he said. "If you do, you will have a lasting disappointment. The readers of novels don't care one straw about the Isle of Man. Nobody cares about it, and I would earnestly counsel you to dismiss the thought."

"But if you *must* write about that God-forsaken little island, you ought to go to my brother Tom."

I did not go to his brother Tom, but with characteristic sweetness his brother Tom came to me, and thus began one of the tenderest and truest friendships of my life, my friendship with the racy, the brilliant, the entirely charming and delightful author of "Fo'c's'le Yarns," the most loyal, the most generous, the most unselfish of men.

T. E. Brown afterwards wrote an amusing letter on the fact that for nearly a year after publication of this first Manx novel

the island itself appeared to be totally unaware of its existence.

"I am perfectly amazed that, as yet, no notice of your book has appeared in the Manx papers. But they are so curious, these Manx pressmen! Conceive these worthy persons week after week cramming their sheets with Reports of Tynwald, and Local Companies, with the facetiæ of Auctioneers, the recriminations of Town Commissioners, the lucubrations of Lockerby V. Cowin of 'The Belvedere,' and not a word, so far as I know, in recognition of the fact that they have . . ."

It is hard for me to hold my hand in quoting from Brown's letters, and I ask my readers to believe that of all the rewards that have come to me for my books the most precious by far was the fact that certain of them were clasped to the breast of the man of genius who wrote "Fo'c's'le Yarns."

I have written several Manx novels since that first one, calling up as from an inexhaustible granary the crops of incident and character which I had unconsciously gathered in my youth, and perhaps it is by these books, whatever their shortcomings, that my name is best known to the public in general; but it has always been a source of pathetic amusement to me to remember how the island itself received its first novelist. If novels had been written about it before, that fact had made no impression upon its consciousness; and if dialect poems of great raciness and charm had been published by Brown, the rumor of them had unhappily not gone far. But now for the first time a writer of story-books had penetrated into its households, getting into the heart of the country, going



into the farmhouses, and deliberately sitting down by the turf fire in the "chollagh." The outside world cannot understand what that means; but we who are of the soil and have visions of stern old Churchmen and grim old Methodists in every village, who never saw a novel in their lives and would not have touched one with the longest "grip" if it had been tossed over the tailboard of a cart, can realize the feeling with which the island must have grasped the fact that a degenerate son of her own was (as the worthy preacher on the "plan-beg" put it) "actually earning his living by telling lies."

It was not at once, however, that our sober, class-leading island reconciled itself to the idea that these novels were fictions at all. I was constantly hearing them discussed as fact. Shortly after the publication of "The Deemster" a good Manxman wrote to tell me that he had known Dan Mylrea from his boyhood up, that he had often warned the poor boy against the way he was going, and that, when drink got the better of him at last and he killed his cousin Ewan, he had come to his house on the night of the murder and given him the knife with which he had committed the crime—and my correspondent had kept it ever since.

After "The Bondman," I chanced on an old Manxman in Kirk Maughold, who told me he had known the place all his life, and he remembered Adam Fairbrother and the six big, lazy brothers, and the girl Greeba, and the mill at Port-e-Vullin (for it was "himself that felled it"), but he was "plagued mortal" to fix Jason, the Ice-lander, and he couldn't meet with anyone in the parish who remembered anything about him. After "The Manxman," a shrewd old friend of mine, living by the water trough on Ballure, conceived the idea that he was the hero of that story, a photographer photographed him in that character, and now the good canny man does a comfortable business by selling souvenirs of himself as the only original Pete Quilliam, whom Kitty Creegan was so heartless as to run away from.

But whatever the attitude of the Isle of Man toward the novels that are chiefly associated with my name, I count it as a sufficient return for all the labor they gave me that they brought the brotherly friendship

of T. E. Brown. Rossetti alone excepted, he was the most brilliant and fascinating creature I have ever known. Half sailor, half parson, as W. E. Henley happily described him, a thickset, almost "stocky" person to look upon, with a roll in his walk, and a sort of lurch in his talk, too, with a square jaw, a moist and glistening eye, a mouth that could be as firm as if cast in bronze and then as soft as if blown in foam, strong yet tender, full of the joy of life, delighting in the mere sense of being alive, loving the mountains and the sea and the sky and the song of birds, but humanity above everything, and woman above all—he was a man, and I think a great one.

So unusual a mixture of saint and, let me say, sinner, of scholar and poet, and parson and ordinary human being, I have never met in any other being. He was capable of the highest flights of the spirit when it is alone with God and feels the knitting together of the riven tissues, the dew of Hermon, the balm of Gilead; but there was no sanctimoniousness about Brown; no sickly and mawkish religiosity; he loved to adjust his ideas to the rugged level of everyday life, to tune his talk to the common *lingua vulgaris* (with an occasional "Damn it all, man!"), whatever conventions were made to bleed. No affectation ever touched him, no pretense, no humbug of any kind. As a poet he had the fullness of maternal delight in all that came up from the depths of his being, and as a man he had the never-failing joy of his masculinity.

#### WILKIE COLLINS

One of the best of the rewards which my first Manx novel brought me was the friendship of Wilkie Collins, and I value among the most priceless of my possessions the letter he wrote to me after reading it. It was a long letter full of generous and noble praise, but full, too, of candid and valuable advice.

I did not know Wilkie Collins long, but I knew him well. He had written saying that I should be welcome to call upon him, but must be prepared to find him suffering the domestic agonies of moving from one place of abode to another.

"If you don't object to a room without a carpet or a curtain, I can declare myself still possessed of a table and two chairs,

pen and ink, cigars, and brandy and water, and I should be delighted to see you."

I found him in the heart of London, for he was then living in Gloucester Place. The house was large and rather dingy. The walls were paneled, the stairs were of stone, the hall was cold, and the whole house cheerless. The door had been answered by a man servant, whose nervousness and diffidence told a long story in advance of the habits of close retirement observed by the master I had come to see. On the walls of the room that I was shown into hung pictures of the greatest interest. There was an etching of Dickens that I had never seen anywhere else, showing a healthier and handsomer face than the one familiar to the public, without any signs either of the days of "Hungerford Market," or of the death's hand that lay heavy on it at the last. Then there was a portrait of Collins himself in the earliest years of his manhood, boyish, even girlish, almost childlike in its simple expression, and with the forehead that belonged to Collins alone—round, protrusive, and overhanging heavily. There was another portrait of the author by Millais, and a photograph by Sarony, of New York, representing Collins when the boyish face was half hidden by an abundant beard, and the youthful head had grown leonine.

I had first seen Wilkie some years before, when he was pointed out to me by Rossetti. It was on one of our melancholy drives for fresh air and exercise through the streets and parks of London, usually with the windows of the carriage up and the poet thrust back into the corner of the carriage, behind the folds of his Inverness cape, and under the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat, pulled low over his face. The hidden eyes that missed nothing saw a figure that they recognized walking past us on the footpath.

"That must be Wilkie Collins," said Rossetti, and I looked and saw a small, elderly man, gray-haired and gray-bearded, large-eyed and lion-headed, round-shouldered and stooping heavily. That was my first glimpse of Collins, and, swift as it was, it left its vivid impression, so that when he came into the room to welcome me, I remembered in a moment that I had seen him before.

But he had grown feebler in the interval,

paler in the face, and more flabby. His eyes at that time were large and protuberant, and they had the vague and dreamy look that is sometimes seen in the eyes of the blind. Perhaps I should come near to giving the right impression if I were to add that the expression of Collins's eyes at this period of his life was that of a man to whom chloroform had just been administered. They fixed my attention instantly, and Collins saw that it was so. Perhaps he suspected that I read their strange look by the light of my experience with Rossetti; perhaps he was loath to trust me then as he trusted me later; but before we had been talking long he interrupted the conversation and said:

"I see that you can't keep your eyes off my eyes, and I ought to say that I've got gout in them, and that it is doing its best to blind me."

I found him a good and animated talker, never spontaneous, but always vigorous and right. His voice was full and of even quality; a good voice, not at all a great one. In manner he was quiet, a little nervous, and not prone to much gesture. He sat, while he talked, with his head half down, and his eyes usually on the table; but he looked into one's face from time to time, and then his gaze was steady and encouraging, and one never felt for a moment that his eye was upon one.

Indeed, without being the most "magnetic" of men, Collins was a man to set one at one's ease, to get the best out of one, to send one away with a comfortable feeling toward oneself, and yet a man with a proper sense of personal dignity. You never knew it for dignity, and that was exactly where its strength lay. The same large grasp of fact and command of detail which one found in the novels one found in the novelist.

At that first meeting we talked on many subjects. I remember that I wanted information on the copyright law, for the plot of one of my novels had been taken by some dramatic thief, and I had a mind to fight him. Collins was very full, very precise, and very emphatic on that subject, having paid bitterly for special knowledge over two of his own stories, "The Woman in White" and "The New Magdalen." He was quite sure that I had not a leg to stand on, though of course he joined his

wail with mine over the iniquitous law that recognized a copyright in words and none in ideas.

Then we talked of French writers, and he said something that I cannot remember of how he met with Victor Hugo, whose plays, no less than his novels, he admired. But the elder Dumas among French novelists was clearly the god of his idolatry, and "The Three Musketeers" was his ideal of a great story. He had been many times in the way of meeting Dumas, but had never done so. Then he talked of Scott, whom he valued beyond words of appraisement, thinking "The Bride of Lammermoor" the greatest of all prose tragedies. Something he said, too, of Dickens, but only in the character of a near and dear friend, with a perceptible sinking of the soft voice and a noticeable melting of the gentle eyes. Charles Reade was also mentioned in relation to a memoir that had then been lately published, and the impression left with me was that the rougher side of Reade's character had never been seen by Collins except as the whole world saw it in the squabbles of the newspapers.

I seem to have dwelt too long on this first interview, but, indeed, it was the type of many interviews that followed it. I consulted him on schemes for novels, and discussed with him the structure of several of my stories. He was always kindly, always alert, always enthusiastic, always capable of entering into the hopes and aims of a younger literary colleague.

His letters were as full of pith as his conversation. Nothing appeared in them more frequently than his boyish delight in his work. It was not done easily, but with great and often grievous labor—labor of conception, of construction, and of repeated writing and rewriting—and yet he held to it, clung to it, and when torn from it by sickness he returned to it in health with the fiercest eagerness of the literary aspirant. Never was authorship less of a trade to any author, though he was a competent business man, and knew how to make the most of his market. To write stories was a passion to him, and he was as much a slave to it when he was beginning the story which he left unfinished at his death as he had been five-and-twenty years earlier, before fame had come to him or fortune was within his grasp.

Wilkie had many good stories, and he told them well. His style was quiet, but emphatic, precise, and perhaps slow, the points cumulative in their effect, most carefully led up to, and ending always in complete success. The pistol never missed fire when Wilkie pulled the trigger. His memory was strong, and his store of good things was plentiful.

Some of his stories concerned his own novels and their readers, and I recall one of them that relates to "The Woman in White." Immediately after the production of that book, when all England was admiring the arch-villainy of the "Fosco," the author received a letter from a lady who has since figured very largely in the public view. She congratulated him upon his success with somewhat icy cheer, and then said: "But, Mr. Collins, the great failure of your book is your villain. Excuse me if I say you really do not know a villain. Your Count Fosco is a very poor one, and when next you want a character of that description, I trust that you will not disdain to come to me. I know a villain, and have one in my eye at this moment that would far eclipse anything that I have ever read of in books. Don't think that I am drawing upon my imagination. The man is alive and constantly under my gaze. *In fact, he is my own husband.*" The lady was the wife of Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Mention of "The Woman in White" reminds me of a story which I may or may not have heard from Wilkie's own lips. After the story had been written and the time had come to begin its serial publication, a title had not yet been found. A story could not be published without a title, but neither the author nor his friends could hit on one that seemed suitable. Dickens had been appealed to and had failed. So had Forster, who was prolific in good titles. Wilkie was in despair. The day was approaching when the story must begin in *All the Year Round*. So one day the novelist took himself off to Broadstairs, determined not to return until a title had been found. He walked for hours along the cliff between Kingsgate and what is called Bleak House; he smoked a case of cigars, and all to no purpose; then, vexed and much worn by the racking of his brains, he threw himself on the grass as the sun went down. He was facing the North Foreland Lighthouse,

and, half in bitter jest, half unconsciously, he began to apostrophize it thus:

"You are ugly and stiff and awkward; you know you are as stiff and weird as my white woman—white woman—woman in white—the title, by Jove!"

It was done; a title had been hit upon, and the author went back to London delighted.

The idea of the white woman was suggested by a letter from some unknown correspondent, asking him to interest himself in some real or supposed wrongful incarceration in a lunatic asylum. About the same time he came upon an old French trial (he had many French "Newgate Calendars"), turning upon a question of substitution of persons, and so it struck him that a substitution effected by help of a lunatic asylum would afford a good central idea. He wrote the book and was quite exhausted at the end of it. So he made arrangements for its publication in library form, and went away for a long holiday in a place at some distance, where letters would not reach him.

When he returned home he found his desk piled mountains high with letters from correspondents, and newspapers containing reviews. Also he found his mother (he was still living under the parental roof) in great distress over the severity with which the book had been handled by the press. "Well," he said, "let us see." So he read the reviews first. They were nearly all as bad as it was possible for the good critics to make them. Then he read the letters, and they brimmed over with eulogy.

"Now," thought Wilkie, "this teaches me a lesson. These letters are nearly all from total strangers, and may be said to represent in some measure the opinion of the general public. These reviews are by professional writers, some of them my intimate friends. Either the public is right and the press is wrong, or the press is right and the public is wrong. Time will tell. If the public turns out to be right, I will never trust the press again."

Thus he waited for the verdict of time, and it seemed to come confidently enough. The end of it was that Collins lost all faith in review articles, and went the length of grievously understating their effect on public opinion.

One day, toward the beginning of 1888, I called upon him in great excitement about

a difference I had just had with a friend with whom I was trying to collaborate. I wished him to adjudicate in the dispute, and he cordially undertook to do so. "State the difficulty," he said, and I stated it with much fullness. He stopped me again and again—repeated, questioned, and commented. Two hours went by like ten minutes. We were sitting in Wilkie's workshop, with proofs of his current work everywhere about us. The point was a knotty one, and a serious issue seemed involved in it. Wilkie was much worried.

"My brain is not very clear," he said once or twice, taking a turn across the room. Presently, and as if by a sudden impulse, he opened a cabinet and took out a wineglass and what seemed to be a bottle of medicine. "I'm going to show you one of the secrets of my prison-house," he said with a smile, and then he poured from the bottle a full wineglass of a liquid resembling port wine. "Do you see that?" he asked. "It's laudanum." And straightway he drank it off.

"Good heavens, Wilkie Collins!" I said, "how long have you taken that drug?"

"Twenty years," he answered.

"More than once a day?"

"Oh, yes, much more. Don't be alarmed. Remember that De Quincey used to drink laudanum out of a jug."

Then he told me a story, too long to repeat, of how a manservant of his own had killed himself by taking less than half of one of his doses.

"Why do you take it?" I asked.

"To stimulate the brain and steady the nerves."

"And you think it does that?"

"Undoubtedly," and laughing a little at my consternation, he turned back to the difficult subject I had come to discuss. "I'll see it clearer now. Let us begin again," he said.

"Wait," I said. "You say, my dear Wilkie, that the habit of taking laudanum stimulates your brain and steadies your nerves. Has it the same effect on other people?"

"It had on Bulwer Lytton," answered Collins. "He told me so himself."

"Well, then, Wilkie Collins," I said, "you know how much I suffer from nervous exhaustion. Do you advise me to use this drug?"

He paused, changed color slightly, and then said quietly, "No."

The last time I saw Collins he was in great spirits and full of the "Reminiscences" that he intended to write. He talked of all his old friends with animation, the friends of his youth, "all gone, the old, familiar faces"; and there was less than usual of the dull undertone of sadness that had so often before conveyed the idea of a man who felt that he had strutted too long on his little stage. He enjoyed his wine and some old brandy that came after it, and a couple of delicious little cigars of a new brand which he loudly recommended. The more serious questions of literature and morality were all banished, and yarn followed yarn. I can only remember a single sad note in his conversation, and it was ominous. He was talking of Dickens, and I think he said he had been engaged to visit at Gad's Hill on the very day that Dickens died.

A few days later Wilkie Collins wrote inviting me to lunch, but naming no particular day. I was to go what day I liked, only remembering to send a telegram two or three days in advance. So one Sunday morning I wrote a letter telling him that I meant to visit him the following day, and asking him for a telegram to say if the time would do. Instead of Wilkie's telegram there came a message from his affectionate adopted daughter, saying that on the previous morning our dear Wilkie had been struck down with paralysis.

He may have had his weaknesses—I know of very few. He may have had his sins—I never heard tell of any. He was loyal and brave and sweet and unselfish. He had none of the vices of the literary character, none, at least, that ever revealed themselves to me. In the cruel struggle for livelihood that depends on fame he injured no man. He lived his own life, and was beloved by his own people.

#### MY FIRST PLAY

Notwithstanding the generous confidence of my friends, coupled as I fear it was with my own opinion that under favorable conditions I could write a play, I made no serious attempt to do so until dramatic pirates began to appropriate my novels. Then I remembered Wilson Barrett's request, and sent him my first Manx novel, thinking the

subject and chief character might suit him. He answered that both seemed promising, and asked me to see him immediately, for he had reached a crisis in his fortunes when a change in his programme was necessary.

It was early spring, I remember, one of the worst of the second winters that come to our English climate, and I was staying with my people in Liverpool, but with the utmost eagerness I packed my bag and set off for London, hardly knowing yet where the drama lay in my narrative story, and seeing many perplexing difficulties.

A few miles out of Liverpool, traveling by the Midland route, I was overtaken by the densest fog, and at Derby, to my great chagrin, I was compelled to leave the train; but what seemed to my impatience to be the most vexatious accident proved to be the most fortunate circumstance. The fog, which enveloped almost the whole of England, lasted eight days; I sought refuge from it among the hoar frost in the heights of Dove Dale, and while waiting in the old Isaac Walton Inn (alone there, and thrown entirely on my thoughts) for the clouds to lift that cut me off from London, the clouds in my brain were also dissipated, and I thought my play for all practical purposes was produced.

Then with a full scenario I completed my journey and found Barrett more than content. We struck and signed a bargain straightaway, I remember, two guineas a performance for me until my royalties reached eight hundred pounds, when my interest was to end, and though I had not a penny piece of this money in my pocket, and everything depended upon the opinion of the public, and my fortune was like a glistening bubble in the air, I came away from our interview with a sense of possessing more wealth than I had ever yet known to be in the world.

Not only was my money not yet earned, my play was not yet written, and toil and pain and sleepless nights there were to go through before it got itself done. And even when I came to an end and thought my curtain had fallen for good, I realized from the sharp criticism of my colleague that I had been working in a medium that was new to me, and not all the supernatural wisdom I had won in earlier days as a dramatic critic had taught me the hundred



and one technical tricks that are necessary to success on the stage.

What Barrett himself did to make my first play a practical effort it is unnecessary to say, but sure I am that without his knowledge of the "ropes" of the theater the dramatic instinct on which my friend Blackmore had counted to produce "a grand and moving drama" would have gone for nothing, and, conscious of this, I insisted on coupling Barrett's name with mine when the play came to be produced.

Before that, of course, there were the rehearsals, and though in my ignorance of stage management I took little or no part in them, I remember as a unique experience the first moment when, stumbling through the pall of darkness which lies over "the front of the house" in daytime, I first heard my own lines spoken by an actor on the stage. It was almost as if something of myself had in a dream, by a kind of hypnotic transfer, passed into the mouth of somebody else.

By the time of the first public performance this elusive sensation had naturally passed away, but then came another emotion equally new to me and yet more thrilling—the emotion created by the tears, the laughter, the applause, and, above all, the silence of the audience. It is just once in a man's life that he produces his first play, and perhaps he may be pardoned if, after the lapse of years, he puts the experience out of proportion.

I think it was a great first night in some respects. The audience was great, for in all the years since I have never seen so many really distinguished people in one place. The acting was great, too, and the reception was generous and almost tumultuous. I remember as something seen in a sort of delirious trance, through a mist of blinding tears, that at the fall of the curtain the whole audience was on its feet, and that when Barrett led me in front of the curtain there was a roar that dazed and stunned me.

It was not until an hour or two afterwards that I came to myself in some measure, and then, with my friend Tirebuck, who had come up from the country to share my great experience, I was tramping up and down Oxford Street in the early morning, and making the silent thoroughfare ring with peals of foolish laughter. Being

too poor to think of a room at a hotel, we were to sleep at a little shabby boarding house in Bloomsbury, and having suddenly remembered that we had not eaten anything since breakfast, we were searching for a restaurant that would be open late enough to give us supper. We found one at length in the form of a smoking coffee stall at the corner of Berners Street, and there we ate roasted potatoes with a pinch of salt, and then home to our dingy lodgings like creatures walking on the stars.

#### HENRY IRVING

The success, such as it was, of my first play revived an early friendship with Henry Irving, whom I had known during my days in Liverpool. He had been touring in America when my *Manx* novel was published, and saying to himself, "There's a character in that book [the Bishop] which might be suitable for me," he had resolved to propose a play to me on his return to England. But finding when he came home that the play was already the property of another actor, he suggested that I should try to do something else for him.

I did try. During many years thereafter I spent time and energy and some imagination in an effort to fit Irving with a part, and the pigeonholes of my study are still heavy with sketches and drafts and scenarios of dramas which either he or I or our constant friend and colleague, Bram Stoker (to whose loyal comradeship we both owed so much), thought possible for the Lyceum Theater. I remember that most of our subjects dealt with the supernatural, and that the "Wandering Jew," the "Flying Dutchman," and the "Demon Lover" were themes around which our imagination constantly revolved. But in spite of the utmost sincerity on both sides, our efforts came to nothing, and I think this result was perhaps due to something more serious than the limitations of my own powers.

The truth is that, great actor as Irving was, the dominating element of his personality was for many years a hampering difficulty in the way of popular success. When in my boyhood I knew him first, he was a young fellow of thirty, very bright, very joyous, not very studious, not very intellectual, full of animal vigor, never resting, never pausing, always rushing about, and

hardly ever seen to go upstairs at less than three steps at a time. At the end of his life he was a grave and rather sad old man, very solemn, distinctly intellectual, and with a never-failing sense of personal dignity. Between his earlier and his later days he had done something which I have never known to be done by anybody else—he had created a character and assumed it for himself.

Just as an actor might create a character for the stage, or a novelist for a novel, so Irving had created a character for his own use in real life. It was a character of singular nobility and distinction, but a difficult character, too, not easy to put on, and having little in common with the outstanding traits of his original self—a silent, reposeful, rather subtle, slightly humorous, detached, and almost isolated personality, with a sharp tongue, but a sunny smile and certain gleams of the deepest tenderness—in short, a compound of Voltaire and Cardinal Manning.

There was nothing artificial or theatrical in Irving's assumption of this character, which grew on him and became his own and gave value to every act of his later life; but all the same it stood in the way of his success in a profession wherein the first necessity is that the actor should be able to sink his own individuality and get into the skin of somebody else.

No man could sink a personality like that of Henry Irving, and toward the end of his life, with the ever-increasing domination of his own character and the limitation of choice which always comes with advancing years, it was only possible for him to play parts that contained something of himself. He was painfully conscious of this for a considerable time, and therefore it was with brightening eyes that he brought to my room one day the typewritten copy of a play on the subject of Mohammed.

"It's not right," he said, "but it's the right subject. See if you can do it over again."

I spent months on "Mohammed," and think it was by much the best of my dramatic efforts; but immediately it was made known that Irving intended to put the prophet of Islam on the stage, a protest came from the Indian Moslems, and the office of the Lord Chamberlain intervened.

I have produced many plays since then, but I have never again attempted to fit my subject to the personality of any actor, not even in the case of a personality so pronounced as that of Mr. Tree, and I have never tried again to write independent drama, being content with such chances as the material in my novels affords for treatment in the art of the stage.

That is a noble and beautiful art, but it is not one which ought to be practiced, as I fear I have practiced it, with the left hand, while the right hand has been otherwise engaged. It asks all a man's time and more than all his energy if it is to yield the best results. Those results are broader now than they were when I began to write, and they include a large moral influence.

In my earliest days in London they produced on the stage a play of Tennyson's, called "The Promise of May." The play was not a good one, but its failure on its first night was not so much due to its artistic defects as to its daring treatment of moral questions. It presented the conventional seducer of innocence, not as a ruffian who ought to be kicked, but as a thinker who had even something to say for himself. This was grotesque to the English public at that time, and consequently they howled and howled. I alone, or almost alone, with my friend Watts-Dunton, cheered and cheered. It was not that we cared much for the scoundrel on the stage, but that we claimed the right of the drama to deal with moral problems.

That night, in my lodgings in Clement's Inn, I wrote to Tennyson. I meant him to receive my letter with what I knew must be the unfavorable newspapers next morning, and the following day's post brought me the poet's reply.

"The stage," he answered, "must be in a very low state indeed if, as some dramatic critics are telling us, none of the great moral and social questions of the time can be touched upon in a modern play."

That was only a score of years ago, and what have those years witnessed? They have witnessed the rise of Ibsen in England. Think what you like of Ibsen, consider him a morbid, unhealthy, middle-class skeptic if you will, but you must needs admit that he has once for all brought back the living moral questions to the stage.

*(To be continued)*

# THE MECHANICAL HOUSEMAID

BY MALCOLM McDOWELL



HE village cut-up who first dubbed the household cook "kitchen mechanic," builded better than he knew. His merry quip had in it the quality of prophecy, for in these days of fireless, dustless, laborless, wasteless, fatigueless, and drudgeless household appliances, by means of which a meal can be cooked with the touching of a button, a blue Monday wash negotiated by merely turning a lever, and a house cleaned and dusted by simply twisting a valve, the gentle genius who presides over the destinies of a home might well call herself a "mistress mechanic."

Electricity, compressed air and its far opposite, the vacuum; gears, levers, cams, toggle joints, rheostats, motors, pitman rods, blower fans, friction clutches, and many other devices mechanical, electrical, pneumatic, and hydraulic—the advent of all these things into the everyday life of the family almost suggests overalls, pay envelopes and union cards for the housewives.

But this is only the beginning of the régime of the mechanical housemaid. The transformation of the kitchen from the hated cell of the drudge into the fascinating laboratory of the domestic engineer has entered fairly upon its first stage. To-day the attention of inventors and craftsmen is centered on the woman toiling in the home, and every hour sees a contribution from science and industry designed to lift part of her burden and make life easier for her.

It calls for no delirium of optimism to believe that in a short time, even less than a decade, household drudgery will be regarded as a relic of barbarism by every up-to-date housewife in the country. There

is a fierce competition raging around the home between the sellers of gas and the sellers of electricity, between the coal merchants and the makers of gasoline and denatured alcohol, and with the patronage of the family as the prize, this competition is calling forth the best efforts of the brightest minds to meet a demand that is growing more and more insistent—the demand that housework be made as nearly automatic as possible. As it means fortunes to the men who can supply this demand, there have come into the house, within a short time, labor-saving equipments which but a few years ago would have been deemed freaks, curiosities, to be owned only by the wealthy or by cranks.

In Chicago there is a family whose bread-winner earns eighteen dollars a week. He is employed by one of the great electrical companies of the city. His wife, of course, is her own cook, maid, and laundress. On Monday the family wash, which has been soaking in soapy water all night, is put into a tub. She turns a switch; then cuddling baby in her lap she opens the morning paper and rocks and reads while the electric motor is swishing the soiled clothes back and forth in the washing machine. The first step of the laundering process finished, she rinses the automatically cleansed clothing in clear water, turns another switch, and feeds the moist cloth through the rubber rolls of the wringer, which is operated by the same motor that ran the washing machine. After the clothes are dried she irons them with electrical flatirons, and what was once a back-breaking, health-destroying form of drudgery has become almost a positive pleasure.

The kitchen of this home has in it a gas stove, but it also has an electrical cabinet

on which a goodly part of the meals are cooked. The cabinet is homemade, of dark stained wood, and on its broad shelf are several electrical "stoves," plates of iron in which are resistance coils that warm up to a cooking heat when the current is turned on. The electrical oven stands on the floor when not in use, for it takes but an instant to screw the plug at the business end of its wire into the socket, and be ready to roast the Sunday leg of mutton.

And all this in the house of a man who earns but eighteen dollars a week! To be sure, he was a skilled electrical worker, and besides wiring his own kitchen he probably received a good discount when he purchased his equipment from his employers. But this instance is cited to indicate that the man of moderate means is now not only able to install in his home appliances of a like character, but, what is more to the point, he is actually doing it. In many cities electric light and power corporations, in their efforts to compete more successfully with the gas companies, are wiring houses at cost price, selling electric stoves, washing machines, wringers, flatirons and fans on the installment plan, making it comparatively easy for the customer to meet the payments. This war between the wires and the pipes is hastening the day when the mechanical housemaid will be in the center of the spot light.

A peep over the hill toward whose crest the housewives of the country are nearer than they imagine, brings to view the home of the fast-coming future. It has no chimney, for it is furnaceless, being electrically heated. In its basement is the switchboard from which the electric nerves run to all parts of the house. A boxlike arrangement stands in the corner, and from it pipes lead to the floors above. This is the vacuum cleaning machine, its blower operated by an electric motor.

A washing machine with its attached wringer stands near, and beside it is an electric motor mounted on a tripod which, in turn, stands on rolling castors. A long insulated wire reaches from this movable motor to a socket, and on a bench stand an ice-cream freezer, a grindstone, a polishing wheel, and a small ice-making machine. The arrangement of the mobile motor is such that it can be rolled up to the washing machine and instantly con-

nected with it. Its work done there, it can be pushed to the ice-cream freezer with one hand—a child of ten can manage it—and put it to work making the Sunday dessert.

The ice-making machine for family use is near at hand. Several of them are almost on the market. A French invention is so simple in its construction that it requires no mechanical ability whatever to operate it. The chemicals for freezing are encased in a cylinder, hermetically sealed, then this cylinder is revolved in water and freezes the fluid. An electric motor turns the cylinder and the house of the future will have some such device as this to enable the householder to issue a declaration of independence against the iceman.

At the same time that the iceman is, figuratively speaking, being left out in the cold, the bogey of summer heat is also being backed off the porch. Fans, ornamental in design, hold sway in parlor, dining room, and hall, supplanting the sweltering calm of summer with the cooling breezes of spring. Every bedroom has its small electric fan. The kitchen is fitted with an exhaust fan that draws all disagreeable odors upward from the range and by a flue into the outer air. Cabbage and other favored foods that can hardly be classed with attar of roses can be prepared for the table without the mistress of the house ever breathing a sigh of protest.

An electrically heated laundry-dryer is in this basement, and electric flatirons are handy to complete the Monday task. Also in this basement is the work bench with its vise and chest of tools, for the skilled housewife in this house of the near future is able to cut a washer for an oozy valve or white-lead a dripping joint.

The kitchen of this house is apparently stoveless. Against the wall stands a wooden cabinet whose back contains several sockets and switches. On the cabinet rest half a dozen electric cookers, broilers, stew pans, a tea kettle, frying pan, cereal cooker, and toast maker. The oven is nested in a recess under the shelf, and it is so lined with asbestos, mineral wool, or some other nonconducting substance that all the heat is kept within the oven itself. If the oven takes up needed room on the cabinet it is placed on a chair, for its electric wire is long enough to reach across the kitchen.

The refrigerator in this kitchen is kept chilled by the cold brine from the ice-making machine in the basement. While the electric current is making ice in the basement it is making boiling water for the electric dish-washing machine in the big water heater in the kitchen.

On the dining table of this house is the electric percolator for making coffee, and along with it the electric chafing dish and plate warmer. In the corner is the luminous electric heater to take the morning chill from the air of the dining room. The bathroom has its own electric water heater and air heater, and in the bedrooms are found luminous heaters, electric curling irons, electric shaving mugs, fans, vibrators for massaging, electric warming pads to take the place of rubber hot-water bags, a device for drying the hair after a shampoo, the apparatus consisting of a little electric fan driving the air between electrically heated plates—and, of course, electric lights everywhere.

On the wall of every room in this new-era home is seen another factor of emancipation — the intercommunicating telephone. This apparatus, now common to department stores and such establishments, places the housewife in full command in her home, and daily saves her more steps than would half a dozen messengers plus an escalator. She can go to every room, yet never leave the kitchen. She is her own Hello girl; every room is Central. From the vantage ground of the parlor she can suggest to the Pater in his den that he go and settle little Bobby in the nursery. The clarion call to breakfast is sounded throughout the house, with none of the vocal effort now common to such announcements. If the hour for the departure of Betty's beau arrives but escapes the notice of Betty and her guest, the gentle but firm maternal voice can suggest the fact with minimum embarrassment to all parties. The intercommunicating telephone gives the housewife the qualities attributed to a higher order of beings, that of omnipresence.

The pipes from the vacuum machine in the basement lead to each floor, and at convenient intervals are valves to which are attached a rubber hose leading to the handle of a hoelike device which is pushed over the rug or carpet. The suction of the vacuum draws the dust, dirt, and lint

out of the rugs and carpets and carries it downstairs through the pipe into a can of water concealed inside the machine. Brushes of divers forms are used with this apparatus for cleaning and polishing hardwood floors, for taking the dirt out of sofas, cushions, and curtains. The only labor consists in lazily pushing along a piece of bent pipe. Where it is not convenient to use this vacuum hose there is a carpet sweeper, propelled over the floor by a little electric motor, which at the same time revolves the brush at a whizzing rate and with little exertion on the part of the operator.

With one of these simple appliances at command, "cleaning day" loses most of its terrors, and the laborious task of sweeping and beating carpets and rugs vanishes from the list of household trials.

The sewing machine in this house has its own electric motor, and the machine's speed is regulated by a tension device controlled by the feet, so that a simple pressure jumps the speed from a mere crawl to hundreds of revolutions a minute if required.

It must not be imagined that the mistress mechanic of the future will devote all her attention to mechanical devices which lend ease to domestic duties only. Her abilities will also be directed toward those which appeal to her artistic sense. With the same electric or water motor to furnish the power, she will handle the automatic piano during her afternoons of leisure with the same high skill as that displayed in manipulating the automatic washer in the morning hours. A nocturne in E flat will be rendered with the same ease and grace as that with which she flipped a perfect pancake from the electric griddle for the morning meal. Tempo, crescendo, diminuendo, staccato—all the modulations of sound will be as readily controlled by her as was the speed of the sewing machine.

Here again the intercommunicating telephone comes into play. If Madame is indisposed, she can while away many otherwise monotonous hours by listening to some other member of the household perform on the piano. The mere lifting of the receiver from the hook transports her to the music room. In fact it does even better than that. The harmonious sounds, mellowed by metallic transit, have an added sweetness and



charm. Moreover, she can suggest a programme and listen only when her favorite selections are being played. The entertainment never becomes a bore. It can be stopped whenever she so desires. The intercommunicating telephone and the automatic piano are two performers whose artistic temperament is never affected by a seeming lack of appreciation on the part of the listener.

This, then, is the house of the near future; a house whose kitchen is without stove heat and odorless, whose floors and rugs and carpets are cleaned without dust and with little exertion, whose dishes and clothing are washed without drudgery, and whose housewife is a combination of a skilled domestic, an electrician, a pneumatic engineer, and an expert mechanic.

That the woman of the house will be able to manipulate the machinery which is making its way into the home is evident from the fact that ever since Elias Howe, back in the 40's, cut women's work in half when he put the eye in the point of the needle and used two threads in the crude sewing machines of that day, woman has been mistress of the sewing machine, that mystery of mysteries to the man of the house. Before that time she knew little of mechanical devices.

Beginning beyond the days of recorded history with the crude stone grain grinder, she later became acquainted with the grinding mill with its upper and nether mill stone, the bone, and then the ivory and metal needle, the first crude loom and distaff, and then the spinning wheel and improved looms.

But the march of improvement took the spinning, weaving and flour-making out of the hands of women, and it was not until the churn and sewing machine came into her world that she got in touch again with what might be called machinery.

It is interesting to recall that the bicycle craze gave her a concrete idea of applied mechanics, and the automobile has induced many women of high position to take lessons of their chauffeurs to such good advantage that they have become handy with monkey wrenches, screw drivers, files, and chipping hammers. Woman's education in practical mechanics has been helped in recent years by the many devices placed on the market designed to save labor or multiply material. There are scores of little knickknacks, which require more or less expertness in a mechanical way to manipulate successfully, used in the kitchen, bedroom, and around the house.

These are all serving their part in leading women up to the high plane which she will occupy soon as a domestic engineer, the head of an establishment in which electricity, compressed air, vacuum, high-pressure water and denatured alcohol, with all their accompanying devices and apparatuses, will combine to shorten her hours of work to minutes, and lengthen her minutes of rest to hours. Perhaps in this new order of things some educational institution will establish a chair of domestic engineering. The degree then conferred upon the sweet girl graduate may not be that of "K. M.," but it will certainly be some Latinized synonym of that old term of ridicule—"kitchen mechanic."







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ARMSTRONG  
NEW YORK